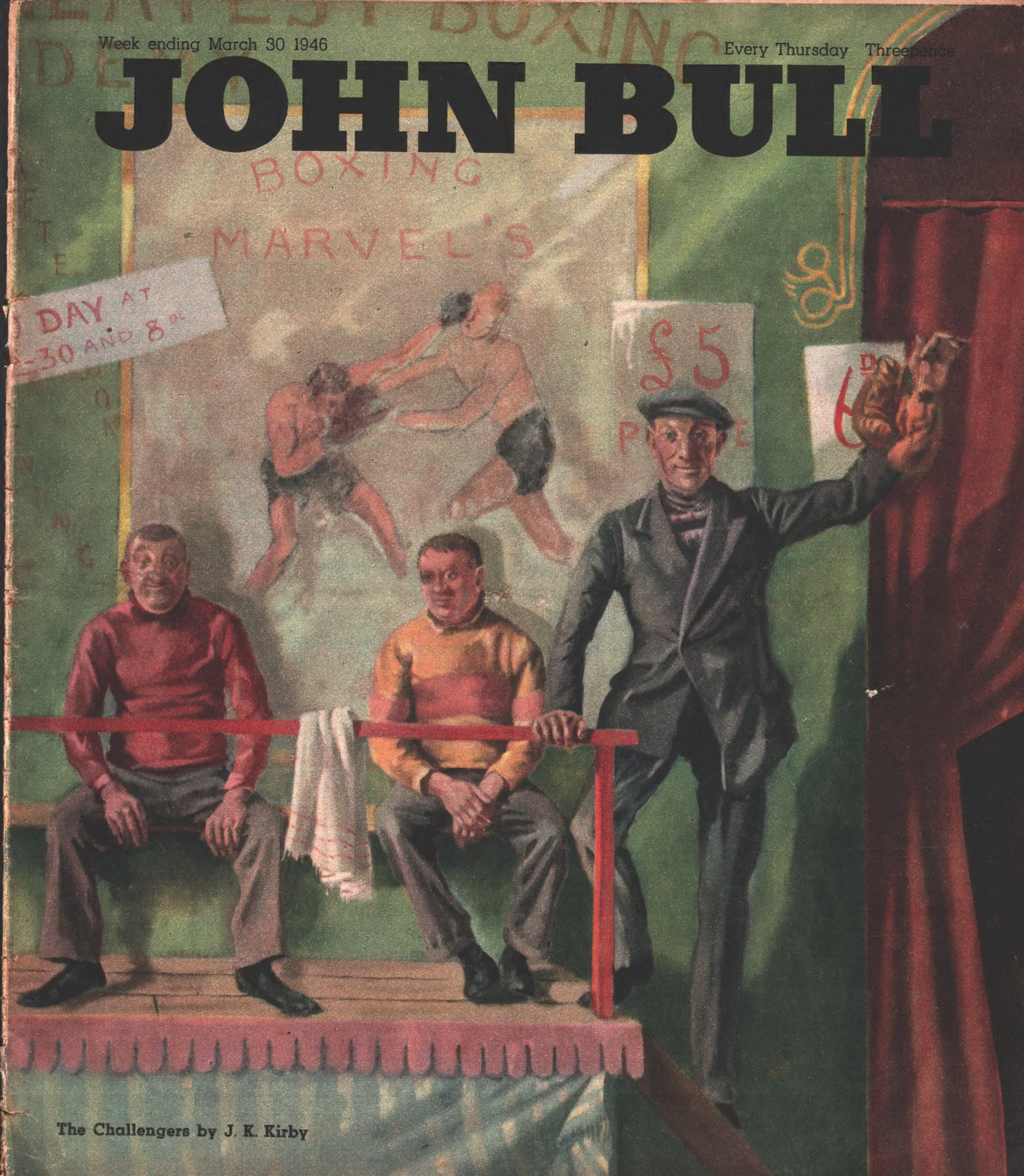
Week ending March 30 1946 Every Thursday Threepence

JOHN BULL



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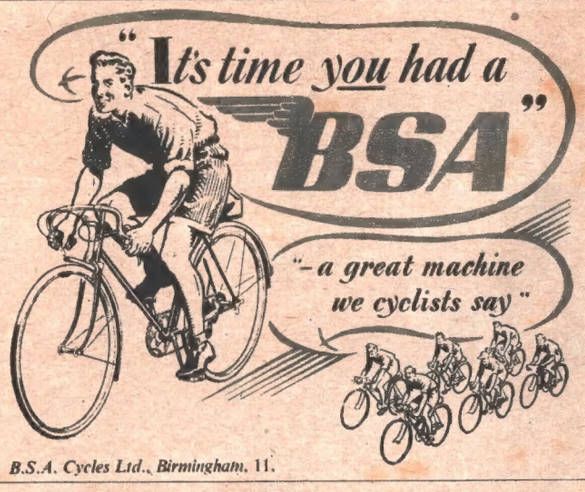

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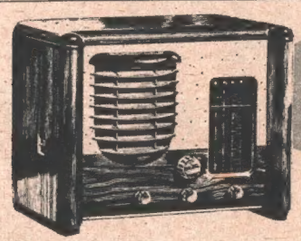

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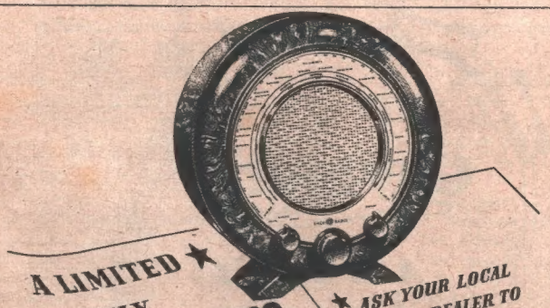

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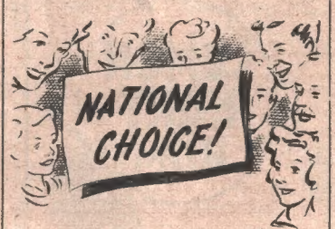

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WRIGHT'S
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When making gravy, thicken with cornflour

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JOHN BULL March 30 1946 Vol 79 No 2076 186 High Holborn WC1 Tel: Temple Bar 2468

CHANGES IN ATTLEE'S TEAM

Black Sunday for working mothers. No comfort for rankers. Ellen Wilkinson saves her head. B.B.C.'s jive humour. First woman doctor. Tattered speedway riders

A GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE is coming. When Mr. Attlee assembled his team last July it was generally understood there would be changes when the "new boys"—and "girls"—had settled down.

Indeed, at least two veterans assumed office on the understanding that they would carry through the transition administrative period from Conservative to Labour Government and would then make way for younger men.

The "settling down" process is pretty well over. The changes are expected before Parliament adjourns for the Summer Recess.

Going Up

Certain for promotion is John Strachey, Under-Secretary of State for Air, and the outstanding Front Bench discovery of this Parliament.

More than any other Minister, Strachey has succeeded in making his department recognize the need for dropping Whitehall language in correspondence and writing like human beings. His own practice sets the example.

One M.P. who had been complaining bitterly of delay in Air Ministry handling of a case, received a personal note from Strachey in addition to the official reply.

His note began: "I know the hold-up in this case has been too —— for words, but . . ." Then followed a quite satisfactory explanation.

Reporter's Rise

Also high on the promotion list is ex-reporter Hector McNeil. Working for a Conservative newspaper, he became a Labour councillor for Glasgow in 1932—one of the youngest members ever.

His selection as the Foreign Secretary's right-hand man last year was a surprise, but he has done more than well. The difficulty in promoting him is that Bevin would like to retain his services. There is the same problem concerning Ness Edwards, former miners' agent, now Under-Secretary to George Isaacs at the Ministry of Labour.

Younger Men

When the reshuffle comes the average age of Ministers will descend sharply. All those junior Ministers tipped for promotion are below the middle forties.

As to new Under-Secretaries to replace those promoted, Mr. Attlee is spoilt for choice. One Cabinet Minister has told his colleagues: "We have at least thirty back-benchers who ought, by every test, to be given their chance in Government office." But there certainly won't be thirty posts to fill.

However, at least three back-benchers of brilliance have ruled themselves out of the promotion list by talking too long, too often, about too many things. Result—they have lost both popularity and prestige with their own colleagues.

D-Year

OPERATION D, an essential plan in the battle for prosperity, is going well. Sir Philip Warter, the Government's adviser on the plan, announces that 350 new factories are now scheduled for the districts where unemployment was rife before the war. At least two hundred of them, employing 125,000 people, will be working by the end of the year.

To South Wales, Scotland, West Cumberland and the North-East Coast Sir Philip has just added two other areas: Wigan-St. Helens and Wrexham. The factories will be airy and spacious, most of them will be engaged in light engineering, and the workers will be specially trained. Of all the schemes initiated by the Cabinet, this is surely one which even the diehards must regard as wise.

Closing Down

BUT CAN THE SAME be said of the blow which will fall on working mothers this weekend? From March 31 the Ministry of Health grant for day nurseries will be sharply reduced, and local councils are having to decide whether they can afford to keep the nurseries going. Many of them are having to give a regrettable no.

What then? Miss Helen Saville, matron of a Hampstead nursery which is closing down, reports that mothers of children who cannot find places in other nurseries say they will have to give up their jobs.

And this at a time when the Government is urging women to continue working and thus help the drive for greater production!

Think Again, Nye

There should be more nurseries, not fewer. "Most nurseries already have waiting lists of mothers who cannot go to work unless their children can be taken care of in their absence," says Mrs. Freda Grimble, of the London Women's Parliament. Indeed, more than two hundred nurseries have been closed.

The Government cannot have it both ways. If women are to continue working, it must be made possible for them to do so. Mr. Bevan should raise the matter again in the Cabinet room.

Mrs. Freda Grimble leads the protest against closing the day nurseries

No Reply

AGAIN, the battle for production will flag if the lines of communication are broken. Telephonists at a big London firm, whose works are in Wales and northern England, tell us that they often dial "Trunks" exclusively for two hours with the engaged signal as their only answer. Our own experience is not dissimilar.

Yes, we know the difficulties of the Post Office. But if a little labour were diverted to communications it would enable a lot of labour to work more efficiently.

Railway Racket

STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN to curb the private car owners who, plying unfairly for hire in Manchester, have been ousting taxi drivers.

But, regarding our recent comment on this racket (JOHN BULL, February 16), the Chief Constable of Manchester has objected to our suggestion that certain police officers were being bribed. In the light of facts since brought to our notice, we must make it clear that there is no justification for that suggestion, and we wish to express our regret that, though the information came from a well-known contributor of high integrity, it was published in these columns.

Ellen Acts

HAS ELLEN WILKINSON stopped a revolt? Ninety-six thousand teachers were likely to demand her head at their Easter conference, but she seems to have got in first by appointing a "working party" for education.

Their complaint—a strong one—is that they are so busy supervising school meals, form-filling and the like that they have little time for their own meals and too little time for teaching.

Ellen's working party will decide how far these duties should devolve on teachers. The new Education Act, incidentally, provides that persons other than teachers may be employed to see to them.

Children Suffer

Certainly school meals must go on—and be extended. Eddie Williams, that crusading headmaster who is chairman of the Children's Nutrition Council for Wales, assures us that the young are showing signs of diet deficiency. Doctors we have questioned agree with him.

Another teacher tells us that his pupils

UNEMPLOYMENT IS OUT OF DATE: by the Editor

IN THE YEARS BETWEEN the two world wars, a fearful and apparently unconquerable spectre haunted the industrial areas of this country, and caused widespread misery and suffering—the spectre of unemployment.

Both to those who suffered directly from it, and to those who were helpless witnesses of its ravages, unemployment was a terror in the land. It overshadowed our national life to such an extent that it inevitably left its mark upon us.

Even today, in an era of labour shortage, and with a Government pledged to a policy of full employment, the fear of another "slump" causing a renewal of mass unemployment is still there. Every industrial dispute is to some extent affected by it, and the Prime Minister's recent appeal to industry for more output may be vitiated by it—if it is not dispelled.

It is therefore extremely important to make the true position clear. There is no need to conceal the facts. They speak for themselves.

Between June, 1945 and January, 1946, the numbers of unemployed rose from about 60,000 to 329,000. But this rise coincided with the release of nearly four million persons from the Forces and from the munition industries. And the top figure of 329,000 compares with the 1,250,000 which was regarded before the war as the more or less irreducible minimum of unemployed persons.

Moreover, January is usually the peak month of the year for unemployment, and among the 329,000 were many only temporarily out of a job while transferring from the Forces or munitions to peace-time employment.

The total of persons who could accurately be described as unemployed last January was probably not more than 150,000—and most of these were in areas where munitions activity had ceased, and new factories had not had time to get under way.

What does all this mean? It means that unemployment on a large scale is virtually a thing of the past. This change in our fortunes is something that should be fully understood and appreciated, since it means a completely new outlook on all industrial questions.

No longer need any body of workers in any industry fear that measures to increase output will ultimately rebound on them by throwing people out of jobs. There is more than enough work for all.

BALANCING ACT

(in a London school) have been "set back" at their lessons by some two years owing to war conditions.

Rankers Answer

CAPTAIN FRED BELLENGER, Financial Secretary to the War Office, has a deserved reputation as a ranker's champion. But he must find it difficult at times to put the department's case.

We think he misses the point, for example, in replying to M.P.s' complaints that there is still too wide a discrepancy between living conditions of officers and men.

He claims there is no difference in the basic food of commissioned and non-commissioned. He defends, reasonably, the right of officers to make such additions as they can to mess menus.

Manners Maketh Officers

Surely the point is as much how the food is cooked and served as what the food is. The officers' mess—often enough, table cloths, decent crockery, cups less than half-an-inch thick.

The men—bare wooden tables, tin plates and mugs; line-up for food sloshed on to their plates or mess tins.

Even now the War Office can't or won't realize that most rankers have come from homes where table cloths were not unknown, and table manners were not so different from those in the more select social circles from which officers are presumed to have come.

No Queue

COLONEL ANDREW MICKEL, the Glasgow builder, is a disappointed man. As a gift to the victory fund of the Ayrshire town of Largs, he offered to build houses for disabled ex-Servicemen free of charge if some kind landlords would provide free sites.

There is no lack of suitable building sites at this pleasant Clydeside holiday place. But there does seem a shortage of kind landlords, and the colonel's offer has lapsed.

Quick Movers

SOME LOCAL COUNCILS are going slow on housing. Not so the Rickmansworth Urban District Council.

Though it has to cover a wide and straggling district, it requisitions within a few hours any house becoming vacant in its area. People able to establish prior claim are promptly and considerately dealt with. This policy of acting first and arguing afterwards makes the grabbing of property by sharks or speculators well-nigh impossible.

Jive for Breakfast

B.B.C. PROGRAMME PLANNERS move in mysterious ways their wonders to perform. "Swing" and "jive" enthusiasts are annoyed because broadcasts by favourite British swing groups have been timed for 9 a.m., apparently for an audience of housewives.

All the jive fans are at work at that hour and most of the housewives are preparing for the day's queues. But perhaps it indicates what the B.B.C. really thinks of jive.

Woman Pioneer

ELIZABETH BLACKWELL is a name not very well known. But it deserves to rank with that of Florence Nightingale.

Born in Bristol, Elizabeth grew up in the United States with the determination to become a doctor. Then began a courageous struggle against sex prejudices. "You cannot expect us to furnish you with a stick to break our heads with," said the male surgeons.

But after many snubs she found support from the students—sons of farmers—of an obscure country medical school. She graduated in medicine in 1849 and was the first woman to be placed on the British Medical Register. The story of her life from 1821 to 1910, engrossing and romantic and heartening, has just been told in a new book we can recommend—*The First Woman Doctor*, by Rachel Baker, with a foreword by Dr. Edith Summerskill (Harrap, 8s. 6d.).

On the Ration

SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS isn't popular with speedway racers, now preparing for the reopening of their sport on a national basis. The Board of Trade has just classified their outfit as a suit without a waistcoat for the purpose of clothes rationing, but has not issued any extra coupons.

Most riders will probably have to depend on old and tattered suits, and their girl supporters have offered to patch them in time for next month's opening of the season.

Unwanted Million

A MILLION POUNDS is going begging. Fifty thousand former airmen and Waafs, discharged before VE-Day, have surprisingly failed to apply for their war gratuities.

Yet the procedure is simple enough. "Other ranks" may obtain the necessary form from the nearest post office; ex-officers from the Senior Accountant Officer, Release Accounts Section, Record Office, Gloucester.

The Air Ministry, having received 100,000 claims, is anxious to deal with the rest. Does nobody want to eat into that million pounds?

FREE HOUSEHOLD INSURANCE BENEFITS FOR EVERY READER

Readers not already registered or who have changed address or newsagent since registration can obtain Registration Forms from "JOHN BULL'S" Insurance Department, 128 Long Acre, London, W.C.2.

Out of Debt

THOUGH HERBERT WILLIAM FRANCIS gives up a salary of £2,000 a year this weekend, he will escape from a nightmare of debt. He retires from the post of Comptroller-General of the National Debt Office, where the red figures in the ledger now total twenty-four thousand million pounds.

After the war with America in 1783 the debt was just a hundredth part of that sum. The bother with Napoleon sent it up to £902,000,000, and since then—but the story is too depressing to dwell on.

However, the more cheerful economists say that in regard to our population and productive power the position isn't too bad. Incidentally, the quiet and solemn debt office in London's Royal Exchange Avenue holds more than £3,000,000,000 belonging to depositors in the P.O. Savings Bank, besides National Health Insurance and other public funds.

Dear Alice

A SLIM, ninety-two page manuscript is to be auctioned in New York on April 3. It may fetch a fabulous figure, for it is Lewis Carroll's original version of *Alice in Wonderland*.

It has already changed hands twice, once for £15,400 and again for an unspecified sum. The last owner was the late Eldridge R. Johnson, a wealthy American.

Cantankerous Creator

Lewis Carroll—his real name was Charles Lutwidge Dodgson—was a brilliant mathematics lecturer at Oxford more than half a century ago.

He had *Alice* published on a commission basis by Macmillan, which gave him the right of the last word in every detail of publication. He exercised that right to the uttermost, nearly driving his publishers as mad as March hares and hatters combined with his finicky demands.

He would insist in having so many copies bound in one style, so many in another. And he would scrap any copy if a margin happened to be a sixteenth of an inch out!

Ballet Boom

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET COMPANY doesn't intend to let any rival companies steal potential ballet stars. Its own school trained Margot Fonteyn and Beryl Grey, and has now produced a Junior Ballet Company which is working with the Wells Opera.

The young dancers in their teens who form this junior ballet, play on Mondays at the Wells Theatre with such tried favourites as *Promenade* and *Casse Noisette*. They are the ballet stars of tomorrow, and provincial lovers of ballet will have a chance to see them in the summer, when they go on tour.

Kirby Again

WE PROMISED YOU MORE of the work of John Kynnersley Kirby when we published his "Country Doctor" a fortnight ago.

We keep that promise this week by reproducing on our cover a painting which Kirby himself calls "The Challengers"—a delightfully satirical study of a boxing booth where the human material on view outside conspicuously fails to live up to the ballyhoo.

Kirby is about fifty-five. He prefers to live in the country nowadays, but is still a member of the Chelsea Arts Club. His friends describe him as a genial Bohemian—this is reflected in his varied choice of models for his paintings!

Hannen Swaffer Sums Up

"THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE"

Swaffer brings back these impressions of America's "ideal life"—money is a god, politicians look after themselves, millions live in magnificent insecurity. You'll be more satisfied with the British "way" after reading this frank and forthright article

High up in a skyscraper I looked down at the Statue of Liberty in the distance. "It's not that, but a Statute of Liberty that you want," I told my host

YOU OFTEN HEARD, during the war, of "The American Way of Life." It was held out to G.I.s as the ideal for which they were fighting. It was proclaimed as a model for all.

Frankly, despite the higher standard of living which Americans enjoy, I prefer our own system.

Lunching with a newspaper editor high up in a skyscraper on the banks of the Hudson River, I looked down at the Statue of Liberty, a miniature in the distance. I said to my host: "It is not that, but a Statute of Liberty that you want."

For, much as you may hear of the boasted freedom enjoyed by Americans, our own is greater.

Franklin Roosevelt knew how to use the machine that elected him. Truman is becoming more and more the tool of "The Missouri Gang."

Fiorello LaGuardia, the bravest of all New York's mayors, told me how, in trying to give his city "a soul," he had to fight "the politicians."

"In your country," he said, "a so-called 'politician' is a man who places his talents at the service of the community. Here it means someone who uses them to get what he can for himself."

You can scarcely believe it, but a pro-British enthusiast told me that he had persuaded a socially-conscious politician to vote for the Loan by obtaining for him a ticket for a function at which he hoped to meet Churchill.

Here, except for a rare exception to the almost inviolate rule, your conviction or acquittal is a matter of law. Almost everywhere in the States, the phrase, "I'll fix it" is commonly heard. It means calling up "a politician" or even bringing pressure upon a judge for whom you have voted.

District attorneys, on the eve of an election, make "a grand play" to the gallery. Senators and Congressmen make the most ridiculous speeches, just to get publicity.

In this country, Hansard is a verbatim report of Parliament. In the States, the Congressional Record includes lectures, articles and even poems included by Senators and Congressmen to please the vanity of the constituents who wrote them!

Lap of Luxury

Americans eat much better food than we do. Although there is, just now, a shortage of sugar and butter and less meat than normally, but a plenitude of eggs and milk, they usually enjoy a variety of well-cooked dishes that make even our peace-time menus look like workhouse rations. Millions of the workers possess motor cars. In their kitchens you see refrigerators and labour-saving appliances.

But, on the other hand, we possess a calm, a feeling of safety and a sense of citizenship whereas they are urged by personal ambition. Americans are haunted by mysterious fears—"The Red menace," for instance.

We point to what a person has done. They ask: "How much does he make?"

We make a Lord Chancellor or a Primate—I give, as examples, Lord Jowitt and Dr. Temple—of a man who, in the States, would be called "a Red."

If they lived here, as I told LaGuardia, he, Henry Wallace, now Secretary for Commerce, and Phil Murray, head of the C.I.O. and often called "a Communist," might all be members of our Government. There, LaGuardia is a Republican and Wallace is a Democrat. So, although possessed of similar ideals, they vote against each other, and are both beaten by the party machine.

Here, idealism has a chance of expression. It can directly affect Parliament. There, the many splendid-minded "Liberals"—the word means anyone possessing good will—are bewildered, split up into groups, articulate but restlessly impotent, large-hearted but powerless. We can displace a Government, by public will, in an hour. In the States, the President is the boss for four years.

American skyscrapers, magnificent and awesome in their grandeur, reach the heavens. American idealisms lie fruitlessly in the gutter.

"Big Business" Warfare

Here, most industrialists tune themselves into a system that, more and more, we seek to modernize. They sit, in "working parties," with their trade-unionist employees. There, I saw Big Business, cruel and tyrannous, fighting "the unions" in a civil war that may bring a mighty nation to disaster.

In America the soul of the artist, the author, and the composer is strangled by money.

I am not surprised that oratory is dead in a land that listens every Sunday night to the vulgar half-knowledge of the blatant broadcasts of Walter Winchell. I almost prefer the sedate dullness of the B.B.C.

You can buy, in any large American city, almost anything all round the clock. A man walked into a drug-store in Los Angeles the other day and asked for a whisk broom. When told they hadn't one, he shouted: "This is a fine drug-store!"

Americans, I am not knocking you. I most sincerely admire your enthusiasm, your alertness of mind and your daring of creation.

Your speedways make our main roads look like country lanes. Compared with your lavish apartment houses, with their palatial halls and their luxury, the flats in which even our wealthy live are mere garrets.

Your efficient hotels, found everywhere, make all but a few of ours seem to be village inns.

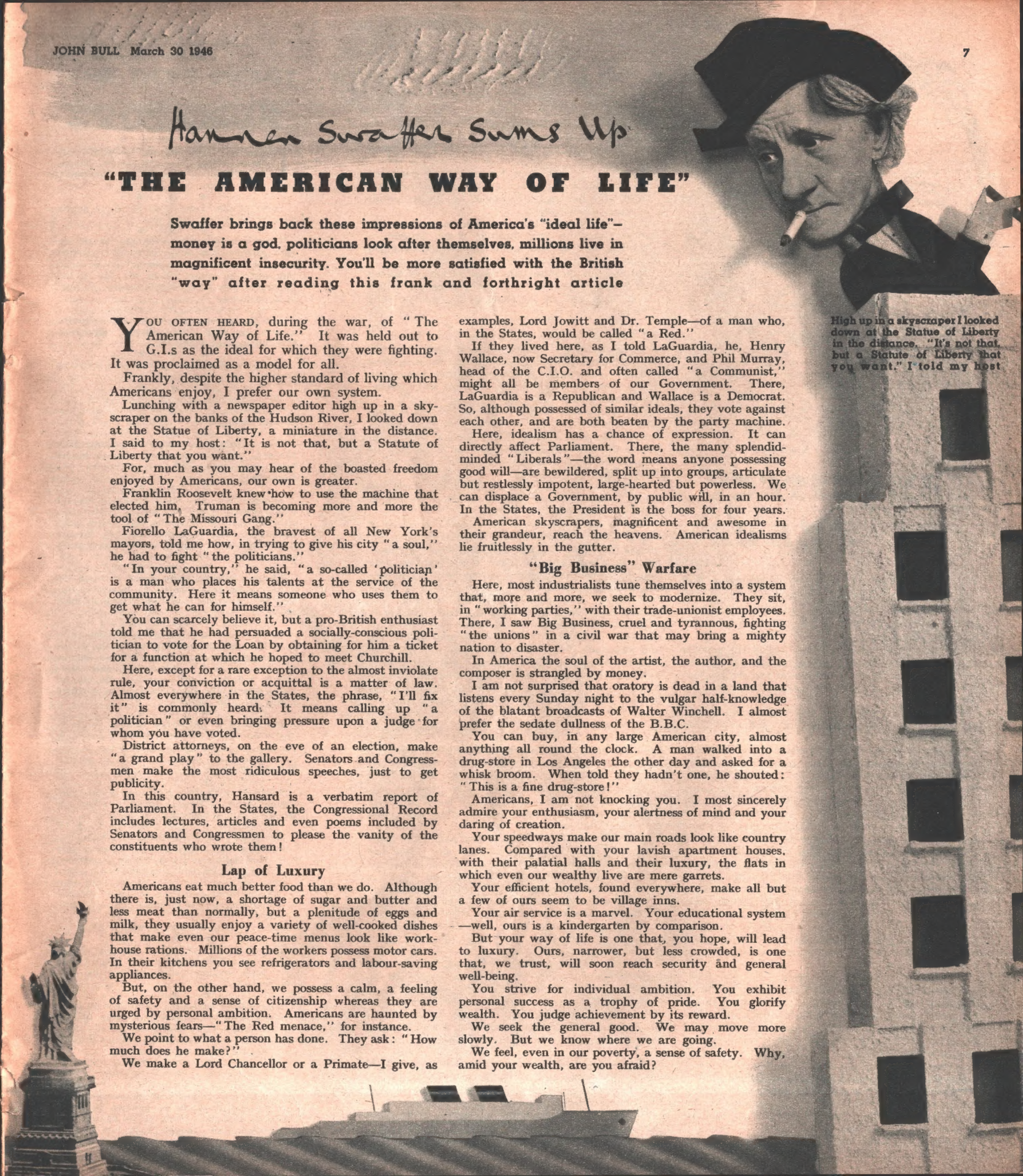
Your air service is a marvel. Your educational system—well, ours is a kindergarten by comparison.

But your way of life is one that, you hope, will lead to luxury. Ours, narrower, but less crowded, is one that, we trust, will soon reach security and general well-being.

You strive for individual ambition. You exhibit personal success as a trophy of pride. You glorify wealth. You judge achievement by its reward.

We seek the general good. We may move more slowly. But we know where we are going.

We feel, even in our poverty, a sense of safety. Why, amid your wealth, are you afraid?



ARCHITECT OF PEACE

TWO MONTHS AGO, Trygve Halvden Lie had hardly been heard of outside Norway, and diplomatic circles in London. Today, nearly everybody knows his name—and many wonder about him.

His election to what has been called the world's biggest job, as Secretary-General of the United Nations Organization, raised him at one stroke from a more or less obscure European statesman to a world figure.

What is he really like, this man upon whom greatness has been thrust so suddenly and dramatically?

Trygve Lie's personality is gargantuan; in keeping with his open face, his bulk and his slow deliberate movements. He has a quick temper but a genial manner and a rough and ready humour.

His laughter is rich and infectious. His energy is colossal, like his appetite for food and work.

He is a raconteur of shooting stories, a great trencherman and a connoisseur of wines and cooking. He drinks quantities of lager but never stout. He is a chain smoker of Turkish cigarettes but never touches a pipe and loathes cigars.

His views on English cooking are not flattering and he has nothing much to say for English beer.

He is quite indifferent about clothes—wears anything Mrs. Lie puts out for him. He is unmoved by a work of art and impervious to a sunset, but will spend days in the mountains stalking elk and reindeer.

IN common with many other statesmen, he has a passion for detective stories. He devours them. He goes to the pictures occasionally and allows himself to be taken to the theatre. He is fond of animals, particularly English setters, the dogs he uses shooting. He can't resist a football match and is a Chelsea fan.

Lie is a quick, systematic worker of fixed habits.

He wakes at nine o'clock and reads the morning papers propped up in bed. At the same time he eats a breakfast consisting of as much as, and all of, anything he can get.

He is at his office by 10.30 interviewing callers and listening to foreign news broadcasts. At one o'clock he has a large lunch, then snoozes for three-quarters of an hour and works until supper at 7.30.

If he has to attend a formal dinner party he makes the most of the meal by getting on the other side of large helpings. However, he always avoids an excess of potatoes.

Lie is forty-nine, the son of a carpenter. He started from the very bottom, from Grogud, a sawmill suburb of Oslo, where his mother struggled to put him through college.

He was one of those rare combinations of brawn and brain; a sprinter, footballer, wrestler, tennis player, skier and at the same time a brilliant law student.

HE joined the Norwegian Labour Party during his college days. In 1919, a fully fledged barrister, he was made secretary to the Central Executive and, in 1922, as legal adviser to the Norwegian T.U.C., he did outstanding work in wage settlements and labour disputes.

In 1926 he was elected a member of the Central Executive and in 1935, at the age of thirty-eight, became Minister of Justice and the youngest member of the Norwegian Cabinet. The same year he turned down the offer of a chair at the Oslo University.

Lie's greatest work for his country and the Allied cause during the war was as Minister of Trade, Industry, Shipping and Fishing.

One of the most valued prizes to be had out of the conquest of Norway was, for the Germans, the merchant fleet of over one thousand vessels amounting to four million gross tons. Lie saved this. He fled to a mountain hotel where he drafted the requisitioning orders and, working with a radio transmitter, directed the shipping to report to various Allied ports. Nearly all the vessels got away.

Lie himself was the last Minister to get out of his country. He followed the Government to London and was made Foreign Secretary in 1941. He made repeated visits to Norway in war-time with a great price on his head. The Germans tried hard to get him. Five years later, as Foreign Secretary, he became Norway's delegate to the United Nations.

LIE was married in 1921 to Hjordis Jorgensen, a childhood sweetheart, now a simple lady whose interests are in the home and who is very well known for her cooking. During the war she did valuable work for the Red Cross.

There are three daughters, who know papa's shooting stories by heart and groan when he starts repeating them to a new guest. They are Sissel and Metti and, of course, Guri.

Guri came to England with her parents in 1940 and went to Roedean. From there she joined the A.T.S. Now she is smart, attractive and twenty and a member of her father's entourage. Sissel is in Oslo University studying English, and Metti, aged fifteen, is still at school in Norway.

The Lies haven't got a home. What they had in Norway the Germans took, and for the last five years in London they have lived in a furnished flat at Princes Gate.

One of the perquisites of Lie's new job is a furnished house, and they are looking forward to it as a new home in which to begin a new life.

Much will have to be done at the beginning—furnishing, decorating and, in the midst of it, entertaining. Hard work, but Mrs. Lie and Guri welcome the idea of tackling their share in a world job.

Trygve Lie hasn't many plans for himself—his are for the world and a more harmonious relationship between nations. He has a rainbow round his shoulder and a place in history.

He may yet go down as the father of Foreign Secretaries and the patriarch of the World State. Good luck to him or God help us!

TALKING POINTS ABOUT

SUNSPOTS

THERE HAVE BEEN several sunspots lately. These coincided with gales, floods, mysterious air crashes, and fade-out of short-wave radio.

★ ★ ★

Some people blame them for trade depression, crime waves, even wars.

★ ★ ★

They can be seen with the naked eye through fog or smoked glass. Another method, used by Sir Edward Appleton, atomic bomb physicist, to show them to his granddaughter: look at the sun through a pin prick in a postcard.

★ ★ ★

The black spots, close to the sun's equator, appear as huge funnel-shaped whirlpools, through a giant telescope.

★ ★ ★

Sunspots are often 80,000 miles in diameter, ten times the width of the earth.

★ ★ ★

The white-hot vapours appear dark only in contrast to the even greater blaze of heat around them.

★ ★ ★

We can only guess what is happening inside the sun, probably something like an atomic bomb explosion, but a continuous performance.

★ ★ ★

Sunspots are the main channels through which electrical energy escapes. This consists of electrons, invisible light (ultra-violet radiation) and, according to Sir Edward Appleton's latest discovery, short-wave emissions in the ten-metre band.

★ ★ ★

Electron streams cross space to reach the earth's upper atmosphere—the incredibly thin air between fifty and one hundred miles above us.

★ ★ ★

Aircraft recently reported missing may have had their instruments put out of action by magnetic storms. The electrons destroy the "radio roof"—the atmospheric layer which reflects short waves. Magnificent colour effects, the aurora borealis, or northern lights, are also produced.

★ ★ ★

Bad weather invariably follows sunspots. Just why is not certain. Broadly speaking, the sun's temperature is rather lower in sunspot years, its electrical activity greater. Result: storms.

★ ★ ★

Sunspots reach their maximum about every eleven years. Hence freak weather, as recorded in the following affidavit:

To whom it may concern: I, J. J. Norcross of the Potter Drug Co., Nebraska, do affirm the following facts: That on July 6, 1928, following the hailstorm, I gathered several hailstones and measured and weighed them on standard store scales, and that one measured seventeen inches in circumference and that it weighed one and a half pounds.

Note the date—it was a sunspot year.

★ ★ ★

The Chinese first noted sunspots about A.D. 170. Galileo re-discovered them. They have been systematically observed for only two centuries.

★ ★ ★

What causes sunspots? Astronomers guess that our sun was once a variable star, blazing into brilliance every few weeks or so. Now the sun is ageing—but every nine to thirteen years it still has a feeble flare up.

★ ★ ★

Some years ago, a Russian scientist insisted that all human destiny was controlled by sunspots. He claimed that increased electric energy pouring upon our planet produced character changes. Some of his figures were impressive. But though 1939 was a peak year for sunspots, there were few in 1914.

CAN THE LEGION LEAD AGAIN?

If the British Legion is to be of value to the veterans of 1946, flag-wagging, Blimp tactics and out-of-date ceremony must go. Now's the time to modernize the machinery

by WILFRED WEBSTER

IN THE DARK DAYS after the first World War, the British Legion was born and rose to great heights. It did a tremendous amount of useful work, earning the lasting gratitude of countless ex-Servicemen. It became a power for good in the land.

Now, after the second World War, in the lifetime of many of its original members, and on the eve of its jubilee, the Legion is again calling for recruits. In a War Office pamphlet describing its work, there is a personal message from Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery.

"The British Legion has done invaluable work in the past," says Monty, with perfect truth, and adds: "It will be of even greater value in the future."

But will it? That depends. The ex-Servicemen of today are in a different position from their fathers and have a totally different outlook. If the Legion is to lead again, it will have to be in step with the young veterans of 1946. And to achieve that, it must cast off some of its older traditions and look to the future.

For the Legion has not been without its critics. The faults they have complained of in it are the kind that would set the younger ex-Service generation dead against it.

The Legion has been accused of having too many senior officers at the top, accustomed all their lives to rigid Service routine and discipline and unable ever to adapt themselves to the temperature of civvy street.

Headquarters has been charged with turning down, in arbitrary fashion, resolutions submitted by branches for debate at conferences. It has also been accused of snobbery, and it has certainly laid itself open to the charge.

Top Men in Top Hats

On a ceremonial occasion some years ago, for instance, the Legion paraded at Hyde Park Corner. The rank and file were in ordinary civilian clothes but, standing out in front of them, the headquarters officials were gorgeous in top hats and morning coats. One of them, an admiral, wore a grey "topper" and looked as if he might leave for the enclosure at Ascot at any moment!

There have been complaints of far too many of these parades between wars. No ex-Serviceman wants to give up his spare time to being inspected by retired admirals or generals, or even by air marshals.

What the present generation thinks about such parades has already been shown. They stay away. But when, at Cheltenham, they were invited to attend a Remembrance Day service independently, and bring their families, instead of parading, they packed the large church.

A good many senior Legion officials should now retire and allow the younger element to have their say in the running of the organization. The work that lies ahead is not for men who have passed the normal age for retirement. It demands a new outlook. For there is a lot of work still to be done, but in rather altered circumstances.

Providentially, the number of disabled in this last world war is much lower than in the first and, with adequate resettlement machinery, there should be no shameful large-scale unemployment this time. Most men and women leaving the Forces will not need the Legion's help to get them jobs or pensions. What, then, can it do for them?

It can band them together in something of the comradeship they enjoyed in the Services. If they do not need help and advice themselves, it should give them the opportunity of being of service to their less fortunate comrades.

Civvy street can be very lonely, for a girl as well as for a man. "Our girls need help to readjust themselves to civil life," Controller Tyrwhitt, next head of the ATS, has said. "And that's where the Legion can help them enormously."

As a benevolent institution, the Legion has earned the regard of the whole nation. This was proved, year after year, by the huge sales of poppies before Armistice Day.

Money comes in from all over the world, and so the figures for last November's poppy sales are not yet available, but in the previous twenty-four years a total of £12,369,805 was raised.

Care for the Disabled

The disabled rightly have priority. The Legion arranges after-care services for severe cases, especially the paralysed. At Maidstone, at Nayland Hall in Suffolk and at Bournemouth it maintains large sanatoria for tuberculosis cases.

Last year, the Legion's advocates conducted 14,316 appeals before the Pensions Tribunals, and during the war they successfully presented 14,553 claims, mostly on behalf of men incapacitated in the first World War.

In between wars, the Legion was handicapped in its efforts to find jobs for ex-Servicemen. By the time it was formed, in 1921, panic mass demobilization, with no planned resettlement in industry, had wrought havoc.

The folly of allowing hawkers and street musicians to wear war medals dragged the name "ex-Service" into the gutter.

Things are far better this time, with a Government pledged to full employment and gradual release from the Services.

Instead of indifference or hostility, as was too often the case in the past, the Legion, accepted as an authority on ex-Service matters, is now getting active help for its members from officialdom. The cards of ex-Service men and women are specially marked at Labour Exchanges, whose officials, like those in the Government's Resettlement Advice Bureaux, keep in close touch with their local Legion branches.

Labour has stretched out a friendly hand. Service tradesmen are accepted as skilled craftsmen in certain industries, and the T.U.C.'s General Council has formed a joint committee to work with the Legion on all questions of mutual interest.

This co-operation is welcomed by the present Government. The Minister of Pensions invited Brigadier-General Fitzpatrick, National Chairman, and three other Legion officials, to join the Advisory Committee on Pensions. The Treasurer of the Legion, Sir Brunel Cohen, is a member of the National Advisory Council on the Employment of the Disabled.

No ex-Serviceman today wants to spend his time being inspected by retired admirals or generals, or even by air marshals. His answer to these parades is simple. He stays away

By close contact with Parliament, the Legion has had much to do with the introduction of legislation to protect the rights of ex-Service men and women. Two notable Acts were passed in 1944. The Reinstatement in Civil Employment Act made most ex-Service people sure of getting their old jobs back, and the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act gave important help to the disabled in obtaining work by putting employers under an obligation to engage a percentage of them.

The good done by the Legion in these and other ways for the disabled, the pensioners, and ex-Servicemen looking for jobs, is obvious to all.

But the future of the British Legion, despite its great record, depends on a change of heart, or changes of personnel—in high places. All traces of autocracy and snobbery must be swept away if the Legion is to rise again and win the wholehearted support of the new generation of ex-Service people.

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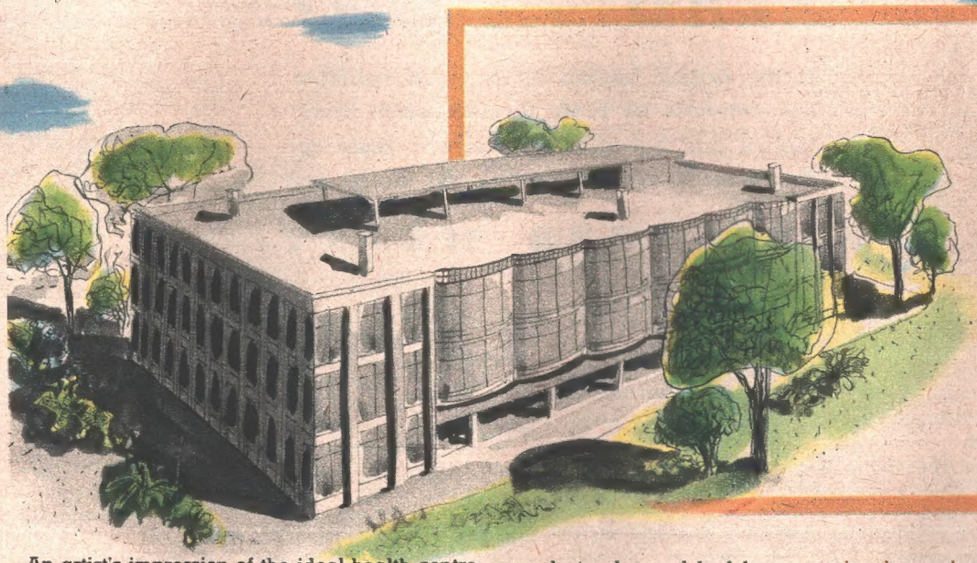


An artist's impression of the ideal health centre

WHEN THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE really gets under way, there will no doubt be a certain amount of astonishment, mixed with doubt and reluctance, at the new idea of the health centre where old and young will get their medical overhauls at the expense of the State.

But like most "new" ideas, it isn't really new at all. It has been done before. A health centre has already made quite a lot of history by dealing more with health than with disease, by making a study of the progress of families from the crib to the last armchair by the fire; by putting all the information thus obtained in three books which give a medical bird's-eye view of this rather rickety England of ours.

The health centre was called, rightly, the Pioneer Health Centre of Peckham. It ended when evacuation and the call-up took away its patients (or patrons) in 1939. It has just started again.

The centres which will be set up under the State medical service will have borrowed little but the name. They will not pretend to give the same service as was introduced some years ago to a few hundred families in Peckham.

But it is possible that they will learn something from the Peckham experiment, as it is aptly called —and it is certain that we, as prospective patients, can learn a lot from what has already been done at Peckham.

Ending a Bad Joke

The first great thing we can learn is that health is not something you worry about only when you are really ill, and have to get it back. It is something you ought to take care of when you are well.

It is an old joke that if there is nothing wrong with you, a good doctor will see that there soon is. In the fabulous domains of the specialists, in the wastes of Welbeck and Wimpole Streets, where no healthy foot has ever trod, they have been telling that one for years.

After no more than one consultation, they say, and a guinea or two, you can walk out a "patient" with a fascinating new interest in life and something fresh and absorbing to talk about.

But it is not so funny if illness catches up on you and you lose your job because you can't go on working.

Thousands of people, in the past, have flatly refused to see a doctor, until it was almost too late, for the following inadequate reasons: 1. They didn't feel really ill. 2. They couldn't spare the time. 3. They didn't like going sick for little things. 4. They couldn't afford it.

One of the purposes of a State health service will be to persuade these people to have a medical overhaul *before* they get ill. And the fact that it can be done is demonstrated by the astounding success of the Peckham experiment.

Dr. Innes H. Pearse, of London, and Dr. G. Scott Williamson, of Edinburgh University, knew they would be called cranks when they built a vast health centre in Peckham, full of lounges and swimming baths and gymnasiums and dance rooms and nurseries and cocktail bars, and invited whole families to join the club at a shilling per family per week.

Family Joins In

It had to be the whole family or none at all. This seemed a doubtful proposition, especially when the family was examined before they complained of any illness.

But people found that they liked the place, and the kids, with adorable precocity, liked throwing Miss Amy Moor's cat in the deep end of the bath to see if it could swim.

More and more people came to the centre, were examined, and sent to the doctor to prevent their little illnesses becoming serious.

They were no longer afraid of the doctors, who moved about in a friendly and unstethoscopic way, and they were able to find the time to visit his consulting room because he was available from two to ten-thirty.

More than a thousand families were enrolled, and nearly four thousand people examined. They told the doctors their troubles about contraception, father's ill-temper on Monday mornings, the suspected intentions of the boy next door in regard to Sis, and the abominable snootiness of a woman three doors down the street. The doctors, watching their subjects day after day, found that the social side of the centre, so far from being an unnecessary luxury, was a great part of its success.

A boy would hear of the swimming bath and wish he could swim and dive. He would wangle a ticket to the centre and find the parents of his friends playing ping-pong or dancing. He would find that he could continue his swimming if his whole family joined. His mother paid a visit and found friends; then father was coerced. Before the family joined they had to agree to the medical consultation and examination, and this proved quite pleasant and reassuring, and was at a reasonable hour. So in the end another family was in the club, and soon mother was swimming and father was playing billiards.

One man was alarmed because he feared he would have to have an operation on his back. He had lost a leg and had been growing increasingly tired. He told the doctor he wore an artificial limb on Sundays and a wooden leg on weekdays. The doctor found that the wooden leg was an inch and a half shorter, after years of wear. When the wooden leg was lengthened his back was all right.

A woman said her husband was becoming bad-tempered and peevish. He had been very fond of active exercise but had been busy lately. Yes, she fed him well, as well as ever in their lives. The trouble was she was feeding him too well now that he led a sedentary life.

A railway porter, after a serious illness, was given a lighter job by his company, but was still in bad health. The doctor found he was flagging trains, standing in the fog and rain without exercise for long hours. The centre approached the railway company and fixed it.

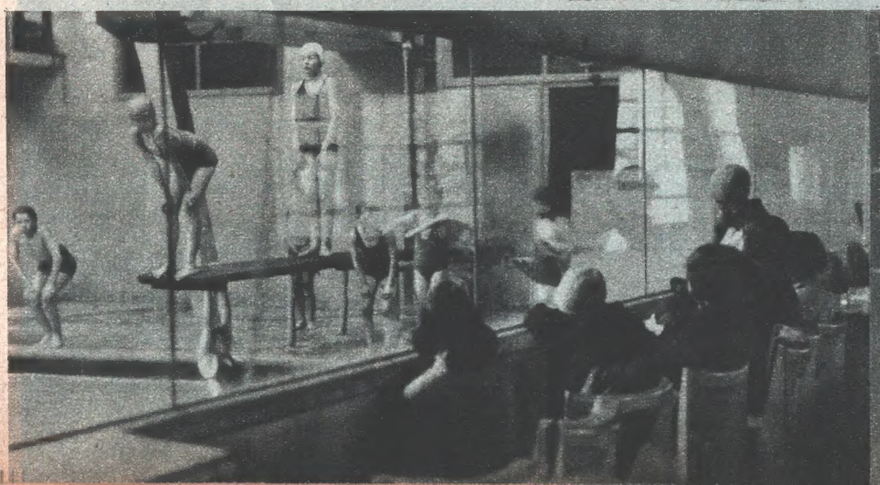
On the Credit Side

The cost of all this was a subsidy per head of £4 15s. od. per annum. But the annual cost to the nation through absence from work is £275,000,000, or over £6 per head. The cost of the Peckham experiment did not include medical attention, for the ambition was to send a member to a doctor before a large bill would be necessary. It was also possible to arrange for special treatment and a stay in hospital.

One member was astonished because a two weeks' stay in hospital for an operation was arranged just before his annual holiday; it was

Newcomers to the centre envy their friends taking a plunge. But the children soon lose their shyness and join in the fun

There is a wide range of and body. These children e



ALTH REVOLUTION

e from work costs the nation
000 a year. The Health Centre at
pioneered an entirely new experi-
keeping the people fit, happy and
The idea is spreading and must
part of our State health programme

ROLAND WILD

pointed out that, this way, he would have the needed rest for convalescence.

The doctors watched while women shyly looked at others swimming and playing games. They watched anxious mothers putting their kids into the gymnasium for the first time. They decided against any organized activity or any professional whippers-up of enthusiasm, and found that if the equipment for amusement was there, both children and parents would use it, and use it well.

Sent to Coventry

They started a neat system of using discs for entry to the gym or the swimming bath, so that at the end of the month they could check how each individual reacted. They soon had figures and graphs which told them more about their patients than a dozen medical examinations.

Coventry will be the first provincial town to copy the experiment. Two hundred acres of freehold land have been acquired, and a "neighbourhood unit" of two thousand houses will grow up there. There will be every usual amenity as well as the health centre, and the tenants will plan the way they live to a large extent.

This is a direct off-shoot of the Peckham venture, for the general practitioner who interested the housing association says that it all came about from a talk by Miss Moor of the Peckham staff. The friendly societies have put up £2,000,000, and the Housing Association of Coventry is ready to go when the authorities say yes. The cost of a house will be sixteen shillings a week, including membership fee of the health centre at half a crown a week per family.

Apart from the benefit to the members, the doctor and the social worker can find an immense field of study in the figures resulting from the disc system in operation at Peckham. These are set out in several diagrams, understandable even to the layman.

There is, for instance, a year in the life of a boy, aged eleven, and called "P. M.," but so revealing that when you have studied his activities day by day in 1939, you can't help giving him a name. Peter Marsh it is, then.

Peter's Crowded Year

Peter's family joined on October 13, 1938, a move that was to change his whole life. The very next day he went for a swim, and on Saturday afternoon tried the gym. The next week he had two swims and went in the gym twice.

The third week, he found the billiard table, the jig-saw puzzles, and the table-tennis room. He swam every day except Wednesday, and on Friday and Saturday did three jig-saws.

There was a great day in March when Peter went to the gym, to the baths twice, played billiards and had a spin on roller skates. But this was nothing to May, when there were days when he swam, played cricket, borrowed a book, played billiards and badminton.

He was there every day now, with few exceptions, and just before his summer holiday at the end of August, in one week he swam thirteen times, played badminton twice, table tennis once, cricket twice, and paid two visits to the gym to work off surplus energy.

Peter's crowded year is recorded by symbols, compiled from the discs he had to leave at the various departments. And then the record ends suddenly. The date was August 31, 1939, and they couldn't black out the big glass building, though they had blacked out Peter's life. He must be seventeen now. . . .

Peter will be back. So will others who have not been evacuated or called up.

The Peckham experiment starts up again with new money and eager customers, and will once more persuade people to see the doctor before they are carried into the consulting room.

Very soon, the regular overhaul may become part of our State medical service. Meanwhile, a few months from now, the Peckham Centre will begin training the doctors and biologists who are to form the staffs of similar centres in other parts of the country. Several more towns are interested besides Coventry. A good idea is worth developing.

Some of the young people (above) avail themselves of a good dance-floor. They are free to choose how they spend their time

Every member of the family finds something of interest. In the modern cafeteria (below), the men like to gather for a chat after work

ealthy exercises for mind
njoy a game of basketball

Organized P.T. is strictly avoided at the Peckham Centre. Here mothers and daughters share the informal freedom of the gym

NO MORE "SERVANT" SNOBBERY

Britain's new scheme for houseworkers will succeed only if there is dignity and respect on both sides, says Herbert Hodge, and proves it by telling you the story of his own experience of "service" as a private chauffeur

I'M GLAD TO SEE that the new National Institute of Houseworkers, set up by the Government to tackle the domestic service problem, is going to offer training to mistresses as well as maids. A well-trained domestic worker is entitled to demand an equally well-trained employer.

William Morris once said that no man is fit to be another man's master.

Still less, it seems to me, is the average woman fitted by the light of nature to be another woman's mistress.

All the same, someone's got to give the orders, and someone's got to carry them out. And the great merit of this new plan is the official recognition, for the first time in domestic history, that money and social position do not by themselves make one woman capable of giving orders to another.

My own experience of domestic service (three years as a private chauffeur) convinced me that there was very little wrong with the job in itself.

Financially, I was better off than as a lorry-driver or a motor-fitter. The surroundings were certainly much more pleasant—green lawns and soft cushions instead of ugly poverty and garage filth. And my employers (both "master" and "mistress") were extremely pleasant people to work for.

The one thing that spoiled it—and completely spoiled it for me—was the psychological angle. I no longer felt like a man. I felt like a pampered slave.

Feudal Hangover

I felt, too, that my old mates at the garage looked down on me for "going into service." I think, now, that I was wrong to look at it like that. But it was the effect of the whole social atmosphere.

Much the same sort of thing applies to the woman in domestic service. Financially, she is usually a little better off than her friends working in the factory or the office (in normal times, that is). And, considered as a woman, she is usually a much more capable and more worthwhile person than if she were doing some routine factory or office job.

In short, she's often a much nicer person to know. And yet, because of our deep-rooted snobbish hangover from feudal times, she is still made to feel herself somehow inferior to the factory and the office worker.

It's all so utterly wrong. If ever I get down to writing a book about "Splendid Women I Have Known," it will be full of kitchen-maids, housemaids, parlour-maids and cooks.

Domestic service seems to be one of the few things they manage better in the States. At most of the American homes I have visited, where a domestic "help" is employed, she has taken as great a part in entertaining me as did my hosts. If it hadn't been for the different name, or the fact that she was sometimes introduced as the "help," I should have taken her in most cases for one of the family.

An American woman told me she had tried the same plan while living in England. But it didn't work. Both her maid and her guests were horribly

"My chauffeur's uniform made me conspicuous. The looks I got from the other tables gave me indigestion"

embarrassed. In the end the maid implored her to give it up.

I know how the girl felt. My own employers, when we were on tour, would sometimes invite me to take my meals with them at the hotel. Of course my chauffeur's uniform made me conspicuous. The looks I got from the other tables! My employers seemed unaware of them. But I could hardly swallow my food. Those looks, literally, gave me indigestion. I suppose I wasn't cut out for a pioneer.

Anyway, not wishing to hurt my employers' feelings with a point-blank refusal, I had to think up small things wrong with the car whenever we stopped; so as to give myself an excuse for slipping away and having my meal with the other chauffeurs round at the back.

I'm told that, nowadays, the pendulum has swung completely the other way. The domestic worker has become a goddess, to whom the mistress and her guests pay humble homage. I don't believe it.

What has happened is that in many cases the efficient domestic worker has found other work to do—work at which she feels she can keep her self-respect. The inefficient worker, who drifted into domestic service as a last resort, now has a scarcity-value. And she knows it. She has therefore become "uppity" as well as inefficient.

And some employers, being unable to tackle the work themselves, are painfully putting up with it.

There's no doubt that the Institute of Houseworkers has taken on a tough job. Attracting women back to the kitchen is going to be as difficult as attracting men to the mines.

But the Institute is going exactly the right way about it. Trained worker — trained employer. Efficiency, dignity and self-respect—on both sides.

And the most immediately useful part of the Institute's job, of course, will be the supply of domestic help at hourly rates to overworked housewives, elderly people, expectant mothers and the like, who neither want nor can afford a full-time resident maid.

Suspecting the Worst

THE recent mystery of the missing B.B.C. Post-script offers an amusing instance of a bad habit many of us have got into lately—always suspecting the worst.

When the B.B.C. announced, the other Sunday evening, that they were unable to broadcast the record of Arthur Koestler's promised talk, the word immediately went round that here was another shocking case of political censorship.

I thought I knew what had happened.

On my return from Germany last year, I recorded a talk for re-transmission by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. I sat by a radio set braced up to suffer my own voice.

Instead, I heard the announcer apologize for being unable to broadcast my talk. I immediately suspected censorship, probably by the R.A.F., which might have objected to a description of the planes I had flown in.

But, as I soon discovered, the explanation was as absurdly simple as in Arthur Koestler's case. Someone, at the last moment, had mislaid the record. The explanation never entered my head.

The moral seems to be that most of us are much too ready to suspect the worst of other people. It's probable that more human disasters—both big and little—are caused by honest mugs than by scheming villains. Whether it's a chemist's assistant giving the customer arsenic instead of bicarbonate of soda, or a Government pursuing a policy that ruins the lives of millions—it's far more often due to someone's honest mistake, than to wickedness.

the human machine

RIGHT SIDE UP

SOME PEOPLE ARE OVERWORKING that ill-sounding word "disillusionment." It is what we are all supposed to be suffering from. To be "disillusioned" is, in some queer way, a complete explanation for all our grumbles, all our discontents.

But you can't be disillusioned unless you have first suffered from illusions.

Now if you suffer from illusions, obviously you're not thinking clearly. You are not seeing things in perspective. You are not allowing molehills to remain molehills. So, if you have been indulging in wrong thinking, the sooner you're "disillusioned" the better.

Harold Nicolson says that "The great secret of successful marriage is to treat all disasters as incidents and none of the incidents as disasters." There is no reason to confine this excellent advice to marriage. It is the secret of all smooth-running lives, and no one who really follows such sound advice can go very far wrong.

For to treat a disaster as an incident is not a simple thing; it is a very big thing. It implies courage and considerable powers of thought, an ability to sum up a situation and make a quick adjustment, optimism seasoned with realism and prudence.

If you can bring these things to bear on all that happens to you, you're going to keep your life right side up and suffer from very few illusions. You are not, therefore, going to need the unpleasant medicine of "disillusionment."

by Roffe Thompson

Young Oliver welcomed the dog, the school board welcomed mother, and mother welcomed Mr. Mifflin. But all three welcomes brought upsets that the family never bargained for

Welcome STRANGER

by WILLIAM A. KRAUSS

ILLUSTRATED by CLIXBY WATSON

I REMEMBER IT WAS ON a blistering hot day in August—in the last week of August—that Oliver came trudging downhill from the apple orchard with the mongrel wrapped in his arms.

Oliver was seven that year (and I was twelve). Oliver had a small fat face with a daylong expression of wonderment, and the afternoon he brought home the dog you'd have thought only the angels could know such bliss. His face was lit up like a sunrise sky.

"Where'd you find that bag of bones?" I said. "Down the well?"

It was milking time, and I was leaning on the barnyard fence waiting for father to turn up. Oliver threw me a look you could brand a pig with. He was about to say something spiteful to me. Just then father appeared round the barn.

"What on earth," father asked, "is that?" He pointed a finger at the skinny, mud-coloured, toothy creature hugged to Oliver's chest.

Oliver said: "It's a dog. It was walking round the orchard eating apples. I found him. I want him." He sniffed coaxingly and backed away a few steps. "Please, father," he said, "I ain't got a dog."

"Haven't," father said.

"Haven't," Oliver said, hurried and anxious.

Father said: "That isn't any great shakes of a dog, boy. I doubt if I've ever seen a sorrier one. But"—Oliver's lower lip had begun to tremble like a new leaf in a springtime breeze—"but I suppose there'd be no harm in keeping him till a better one turns up."

LATER, when the milking was done and the three cows were bedded down, I walked up behind the barn in the soft, warm evening light, and came on Oliver sitting in the gravel with the mongrel on his lap, feeding it with lumps of bread. "Bread's no good for a dog," I said. "He wants bones. Why'n't you ask mother——" Then I saw the feathers and the two yellow chicken feet.

I touched a little heap of feathers with my toe. "What's this?"

"That's feathers," Oliver said. He glanced up at me brightly, with a shine of dusty sweat all over his small round face. "Doris has eaten a chicken."

"Thunder!" I said. "*Doris!* Who's Doris? That dog?"

"Yes," Oliver said. He added, "I was going to name him Dor'thy, but Doris is prettier."

I'd never heard anything to equal it! "Doris," I said slowly, "is a girl's name. That bag of skin and bones in your lap is a he-dog. Do you understand what I'm saying to you? You can't name——"

"I don't care," Oliver said stoutly. "He's my dog." I can remember to this day how he gawped into the mongrel's bleary eyes with a look of worship.

Then I recollected we were straying away from the feathers. "Who gave him a chicken to eat?" I said sternly.

"Nobody," Oliver purred. "He caught it. You won't tell mother?"

Naturally, what I should have done was go and tell mother at once. But I knew instantly I wouldn't. I knew it would make her feel awful—it would upset her, I knew it would. And the harm was done, you couldn't bring the hen back. So I said, ferociously: "Oliver, you haven't got the sense of a crippled goose. Listen to me! I won't tell mother now—but if that ratty animal of yours touches just one feather on one more chicken, I *will* tell, and you won't have any dog at all. Understand?"

I was very angry. Oliver, sitting there with his yellow hair curled up like fresh-planed wood shavings, seemed worried for a minute, and then he nodded and said all right, he understood. He'd give Doris bones to eat, and potatoes and table scraps. "See that you do!" I said.

I wasn't happy about it. I went slowly to the house to wash, thinking that anyhow it was father's problem, not mine. It was father who told Oliver he could keep the dog. Nobody asked my opinion.

This was the day before mother was appointed to the school board.

MOTHER'S appointment to the school board made us all proud as kings. It happened when Mr. Bell drove up to our farm in the late afternoon with Mr. Gifford and Mr. Hansard, the vicar. They were three members of the Little Pollington school board. They sat down. Mr. Bell cleared his throat and said this was by way of being an official visit.

I could see how flustered mother and father were by an official visit. I squirmed small in my chair so that I wouldn't be sent packing.

The school board, Mr. Bell said, had unanimously agreed that mother should be asked to become a member; she would be the only woman member and she was being asked because she taught school at Bramingham before we came here, and Mr. Hansard had just met the Bramingham headmaster who had spoken highly of her. Mother listened with serious attention, a little smile of pride on her lips; then she touched her high-piled hair with her fingers and was sweet and dignified, rocking slowly in her chair. "It's an honour," she said. "But surely there are others who are more qualified——"

"Tush, ma'am," Mr. Bell said pompously. "You leave us to be the judge of that." So they insisted, and after a while mother accepted—as she had intended to do all the time, if you ask me. And then she went in the house to get cake and a decanter of port wine, and it didn't need half an eye to see how bucked up she was about the appointment.

There was, for her, a special meaning in it. We'd been on the farm two years. When we'd moved out from Bramingham, mother had, for the first few months, been dismal about the lack of good neighbours, the lack of friendliness. She had been lonely, and a little frightened by the risks of changing from city to country. But we worked hard—all except Oliver, who couldn't get out of bed in the morning without stumbling into mischief—and mother and father made friends. There was old Mr. Lewis, our nearest neighbour, and the Bells and the Matthews and Reverend and Mrs. Hansard. We were no longer strangers in the village. I wasn't too young to understand that the appointment to the school board gave our family a kind of established position; from now on we'd *belong* to Little Pollington.

Towards dusk the three board members

Father picked up his slippers. He stared at them in anger and unbelief. It was hard to credit that such a small dog could do such a thorough job

full up with port wine and mother's famous plum cake, drove off in farmer Gifford's trap. "Good night, Mrs. Blake," they said to mother, solemnly shaking her hand. "There'll be a meeting at the vicarage next Thursday and we hope to see you there." Father beamed.

On the way to the cowshed to do the milking, father said to me: "Your mother's a wonderful woman, son. Don't you forget it."

I said I wouldn't. "Where's Oliver?" I asked. "I want to tell him about the appointment."

"I expect he's in the barn."

But he wasn't. Just before supper I scouted round the rickyard and chicken run to find him. Then I heard father's voice raised in righteous wrath inside the house. I hurried in. Oliver, tearful, scrubbing his eyes with a grimy paw, stood in the centre of the parlour rug clutching the mongrel Doris. On the floor at his feet were father's leather slippers—or what was left of them. They were father's first luxury since we'd come to the farm; and they'd been chewed to the point where you could just barely tell they had been slippers.

Father was saying, using his sternest voice: "If I find that dog in the house one—more—time, Oliver, I'll get rid of him for good and all. Is that clear?"

"Yes, daddy," sniffed Oliver.

Father picked up his slippers and stared at them in anger and sorrow and unbelief. It was hard to credit that one small dog could do such a thorough job of wrecking anything. He dropped what was left of the slippers in a wastepaper basket. "One more time!" he repeated.

On Thursday week, in the afternoon, as father was mowing the patch of lawn in front of the house, and I was following him round raking up the green clippings, a man walked down our lane.

He was dressed in the kind of clothes the smart Bramingham commercial travellers wore. He had a nice face, sunburned, clean-shaven. When he took off his hat you saw that his hair was cut neat and close, as if he'd just an hour before come from the barber's. There wasn't a speck of dust anywhere on him.

He was carrying a small brown suitcase. He unlatched the gate and walked across the lawn towards father.

The first words the man said were, "This *is* Spareacre Farm? This *is* Mr. Blake?" He sounded as if he were terribly surprised about something.

The man put out a hand for father to shake. "Well, now, sir," he said, "my name is Mifflin. Frederick Mifflin. I've been travelling round this county for close on to ten year—and I remember Spareacre Farm as it used to be. I say as it *used* to be." He swept his eyes across the lawn and over the house and towards the yards. "Mr. Blake," he said, "you're a farmer! You've put this place back on its feet."

His voice was hearty and genial. Father smiled modestly with pleasure.

"And I'll venture to assert this fellow's been a great help to you," Mr. Mifflin said, tousling my hair with a big friendly hand.

Father looked at me as if he were seeing me for the first time that day. "Won't you come into the house, Mr. Mifflin? Perhaps you could do with a cup of tea?"

"Tea!" Mr. Mifflin said, in the tone most people would use if you handed them a five-pound note.

I followed them into the house. Mother was introduced. Mr. Mifflin gave her hand a long, warm shake. "So this," he said, "is the new school board member I hear about. I congratulate not you, ma'am, but the school board."

Mother blushed like a girl. Naturally, nothing would do but Mr. Mifflin should stay to tea. It was high tea in those days—a cooked meal and the last one of the day.

I'd never heard of Mr. Mifflin. I don't think father had, either. I gathered, from the way he looked and talked, he must be a college professor at least.

At table he took two helpings of everything. He even remarked what a bright boy Oliver was. I thought this was stretching politeness a mite far, but it pleased mother. After tea it came out what Mr. Mifflin's business was.

Mr. Mifflin represented the Tome Publishing Company. He sold school books — arithmetics, geographies and such. He had been told that mother was textbook member for the Little Pollington board. Was that so? Mother said it was. And had the board decided, just a few days ago, to buy twenty pounds' worth of books before the opening of the new term?

Yes, mother said; so many readers, so many spellers, and so on, up to the amount of twenty pounds. I sat in a corner out of range of the lamplight and listened while Mr. Mifflin, smiling from mother to father and back to mother, explained how reliable his company was, and what a bargain he could arrange for Little Pollington school.

"Perhaps they won't thank me up in London when I report to them about the prices I'm going to give you, Mrs. Blake," he said. "But I like to temper business with friendship."

For an hour they talked about certain books and special prices. Mr. Mifflin totted up a list. The upshot seemed to be that for twenty pounds the board was going to get a lot more books than they'd expected for the money.

"It looks all right to me," father said in his cautious voice.

Mr. Mifflin passed a contract and his pen to mother.

"Oh, no," mother said. "I'm afraid I can't sign the contract tonight. You see, for any purchase the approval of two other members of the board is required——"

Mr. Mifflin looked pained—a little flash of pain crossed his face. "But of course," he said. "I understand there is some such technicality. Not that the board really holds to it, in my experience. You know as well as I do," he said, turning to father, "how much faith Mr. Bell and the others put in Mrs. Blake's judgment. But, of course, if it's a matter of not quite trusting me——"

Mr. Mifflin was hurt. I could see the smile fade away from his face. Mother saw it, too. He was such a nice man and had tried so hard to arrange the best bargain for mother. It did seem a shame.

"Well——" mother began. She looked at father. "It looks all right to me," father said, as he'd said before. Then mother picked up the pen and wrote her name on the contract. Mr. Mifflin pumped her hand cheerfully. The big attractive smile was back again.

"You'll stay the night with us, Mr. Mifflin?" mother said. "It's after eight o'clock and a long walk to the Railway Hotel." Mr. Mifflin bowed low from the waist. He would be charmed.

Father showed him to the spare room, next to the room Oliver and I slept in. He said he'd like to be up early in the morning, he had to make an early start for town. And, as it happened, he was up early in the morning. But not before Mr. Bell and the others arrived. Not before mother learned what she had let herself in for.

I heard Mr. Bell's voice as I came down the stairs. I thought to myself, it was mighty odd that Mr. Bell should be calling on us before breakfast. Then I got to the parlour door and saw Farmer Gifford and Mr. Hansard, too.

Mr. Bell was talking quickly. What he was saying included, "Swindler. . . ."

"The company is not merely untrustworthy, it's a deliberate swindling concern," Mr. Bell said. "And we've had trouble with that fellow Mifflin before. Naturally, when I heard this morning that he'd been seen coming down your lane late yesterday, I hurried over to warn you. He's a convincing talker."

Mr. Bell pulled out a handkerchief and mopped his forehead. Mother said, in a small voice: "He's here, Mr. Bell."

"Here? In the house?"

"Yes, Mr. Bell," mother said. "He slept here last night."

"Ha!" Mr. Bell said. "I guessed right. He thought he'd unload some of his claptrap books on you—on us. Just let me have a word with him!"

Mr. Bell narrowed his eyes fiercely. Mother's small voice raised up again. "It's too late," she said. "I signed a contract last night—twenty pounds' worth of books."

Oliver clattered down the stairs behind me and ran through the kitchen and out towards the barn. Then I heard other footsteps and I knew it was Mr. Mifflin coming down. I got out of the way. I stood in the dining-room, where I could see but not be seen. Mr. Mifflin said: "Good morning, ma'am. Good morning, gentlemen." His eyes moved around. "Is this a special meeting of the school board?"

He sounded as cool and fresh as spring water. His voice fairly tinkled. Mr. Bell walked stiffly across the room and faced him. "Mifflin," he said harshly, "this is inexcusable. Mrs. Blake is new on our board, without experience. You deliberately took advantage of her. The board will not accept your textbooks!"

"No?" Mr. Mifflin said, and shrugged. His face was different now—suddenly hard and grim and unpleasant, not at all the face he wore when he came down our lane the afternoon before. He said, slowly: "I have no interest in what you do with the textbooks. You can burn 'em or bury 'em. But you'll take 'em, all right. There's a signed contract in my suitcase."

"Prior approval by two other members of the board——"

Mr. Mifflin broke in. "The contract's signed. And legal. If the board won't accept the books, they belong to Mrs. Blake. She bought them. Somebody's going to pay for them."

There wasn't going to be any arguing with Mr. Mifflin. My eyes blinded with anger, and I couldn't bear to be there in the house, within sight and sound of the man who had taken such a sneaking advantage of my mother.

For a moment I was afraid I'd do something foolish, like running into the room and beating him with my fists! I had to get away; I rushed out across the yard to the barn, and up the ladder into the hayloft. I buried my head in my arms and sobbed.

Often enough I'd heard father and mother talking about money, how much was needed for building up the farm. Twenty pounds was a small fortune to people like us in those days.

I lay there, frightened, trying to catch my breath against the sobbing, until I heard a rustling in the hay at the head of the ladder.

It was Oliver.

He stared at me. He said: "What's the matter? You're crying."

"It's none of your business," I said. "Anyhow, I'm not."

Oliver nodded. "All right," he said in the tone that meant he would come back to it later. "I was looking for you. Have you seen Doris?"

"No. Go away."

"I can't go away." Oliver wrinkled up his face. "You've got to help me find Doris."

I sat up. Oliver was on the edge of

continued on page 16

by IAN FOX

EVERY NOW AND THEN I give way and publish one of the letters written to me by my Constant Reader, Hezekiah Shufflebeam. It is a form of reward (well deserved, some people say) for reading this column every week. Here is his latest.

Growing Pains

DEAR MR. FOX,—Now that spring is coming and Dame Nature is ready to bestow her bounteous gifts on mankind, I am writing to give you the benefit of my gardening experience.

Besides, I see that a newspaper is offering large prizes for allotments. You might win one with my help.

The first trouble with starting a garden is that you are always too late. Everything ought to have been planted the year before, except mustard and cress.

Another trouble with gardening is that it happens out of doors. At this time of year, an armchair by the fire is much more comfortable.

Gardening also involves a lot of bending down, especially celery. I agree with Herbert Hodge, who wrote in JOHN BULL recently, that garden beds should be raised to convenient work-bench height above the paths.

One of the things against gardening is the weather. It is never right. I think that was the reason for those little garden plots round R.A.F. stations during the war. When the gardens wanted a spell of really good weather, the chiefs knew they would have to cancel all flying.

Pests are of two kinds, underground and overground. The underground ones eat the roots of plants and you don't find out until it is too late to do anything.

The chief overground pests are birds. The old remedy was a scarecrow, but that is impossible now because you will be wearing the clothes you would have put on it. Netting keeps birds off but is difficult because (*a*) before you can use it you have to untangle it, which is impossible, and (*b*) when you pick the fruit, if any, the netting catches in the buttons on your sleeves and gets pulled all over the place, leaving gaps.

Some people mark what they have planted by putting the empty packet on a little stick. This is not a good plan. If the picture is still on the packet when your plants come up, you will only be disappointed. But usually the packet blows away or the printing is washed off by the elements, so it still doesn't help.

Most gardeners like to try something new each year. This season I am going to water my onions with vinegar so that they will grow ready pickled.

I am also starting a small lawn. I shall plant the seed about two feet deep, then only the tips will reach above the surface and it will not want mowing.

However, in giving you these valuable hints, I think I am wasting my time. From what I know of you, you will get better vegetables by finding a good greengrocer.—HEZEKIAH SHUFFLEBEAM, Your Constant Reader.

BOXING NEEDS A NEW PUNCH

The public will pay big money for boxing, but there's a woeful shortage of material. This is how we can encourage new blood

by

JOHN MACADAM

Bruce Woodcock, Britain's heavyweight, is in a class of his own. He has the makings of a world-beater, but up to now opposition has been comparatively trivial

BRITISH BOXING is in a condition today that, however much pleasure and profit it may bring to the promoter and the manager, not to speak of the fighter, represents little more than a series of prospective flops to the interested spectator.

The names of Louis and Conn and Woodcock, and even the mammoth Carnera, are bandied about, but the entire personnel of the fisticuffing world boils down to a couple of able has-beens and heaven knows how many might-be's.

Louis and Conn meet inside a couple of months, and if they were both to score a spectacular knock-out in the fifteenth round, the significance of the event would be that of a fly alighting on the ceiling.

Whatever the ballyhoo attendant on their coming meeting, Louis and Conn are nearly through. They have had their great moments and now, after one last effort, they will line what remains of their pockets and depart, leaving the world bereft of heavyweight fighters of any class whatever.

This would appear to offer an opportunity to the existing (the word is wisely chosen) British heavyweight champion to step in and pick up the crown from the nerveless grasp of the chief mourners at the Louis-Conn obsequies. Alas, Bruce Woodcock is little equipped for such tasks at the moment, and unless some sort of opposition can be speedily discovered on the continent of Europe to give him reasonable battle, he never will.

Woodcock, a stylish heavyweight with a punch in either hand and less than a modicum of experience picked up against the most trivial opposition, has all the makings of a world-beater—except the essential experience in highly competitive contests. His biggest test was against the behemoth, London, from whom he took the British title. This he accomplished with a minimum of trouble as befits a man with any claim to greatness.

Where are His Opponents?

Now he prepares to meet Freddy Mills on the eve of the Derby, with the prospect of an American fight beforehand, and even if he accomplishes these tasks with the ease of the other, he will still lack the essential experience for a world prospect. Woodcock needs half a dozen opponents of the quality of Mills before he ventures out on the trail.

Where is he to find them? From recent conversations with handlers of Continental—mainly French—fighters, the writer gathers that there is no beef trust on the Continent at the moment.

Primo Carnera is reported to be flailing the air, but he can be discounted as readily as can the 7 ft. 6 in. giant some genius has unearthed in Ashford, Middlesex.

The Scandinavians have breathed life into an odd corpse but, one way and another, there is nothing on this side of the Atlantic for the pugilistic babe, Woodcock, to cut his teeth on.

The only thing for him is to clean up the Mills situation as quickly as possible and go to the United States, there to indulge himself with a modest twelvemonth of club fighting. The Americans are as badly off for top-class heavyweights as we are, and it is against the rough-and-tumble second-raters that Woodcock will learn his job. If he does this as assiduously as he has up to this point, he is the best prospect Britain has had for many a year. But he must beware of even a fading Louis or Conn.

However a round of the U.S. clubs would suit Woodcock, it would be a sad mistake to apply the rule to the present crop of up-and-coming youngsters at the lighter weights. Among these boys, there are some names that will be household words inside a year or two—Henry Hall, Billy Biddles, Billy Thompson, Cliff Curvis. It is early yet to say how they will make out; but Curvis appears to have all that it takes to make a star of the brightest magnitude. His recent disposal of Jim Brady at the Albert Hall delighted even his father, Dai Curvis, who has built himself a considerable reputation in Swansea as a picker of fighters.

This frail-looking eighteen-year-old has a cool head and a devastating punch. Until his meeting with Brady, he had won eight out of his nine professional fights. Here is a future welterweight champion if ever there was one.

Billy Thompson, of Hickleton Main, is another who will wear a crown. He is a busy, courageous and confident fighter-boxer, who looked very good indeed in a recent encounter with the awkward-looking but no less effective Biddles.

Yes, there are new names among the lighter fellows all right.

Potential Champions

Experienced ringsiders declare that Henry Hall and Albert Finch also are potential champions. But all of them have a considerable amount of boxing to do in this country before they venture forth.

The prizes are here for them. Revered Nel Tarleton will not go much oftener—if at all—into the ring, although £4,000 and £5,000 purses are hard to resist. Arthur Danahar is too easily bustled out of his classic stride and the full strength of Eric Boon's coming back is still to be realized. Jackie Paterson has the flyweight situation well in hand.

The unfortunate thing for all concerned is that there is too big a gap between the bottom and the top in British boxing today and inevitably a promising boy is thrown into too-good company too quickly because of the absence of competition at his own level.

This is a state of affairs that promoter Jack Solomons declares he has in mind to rectify. In his West End gymnasium he is constantly running the rule over ambitious youngsters, and one plan is to throw them together in small contests on a pay-your-fares basis before hand-picked audiences who would be glad to recompense promising boys.

Big Money Waiting

This is all right as a method of picking out novices who might otherwise be overlooked, but the Curvis, Hall, Thompson band are no novices and what they now require is fights, fights and then more fights against class opposition.

But whatever problems there may be up and down the rungs of the fistic ladder, there is no problem whatever about current support for the game. Solomons emerges as the main metropolitan promoter and even for an ordinary-looking bill such as the recent Danahar-Walzach one, he had no trouble whatever in getting five guineas for ringside seats. There is today a big public gasping to pay big money for boxing but the fact is that there is also a woeful shortage of material apart from those fighters already mentioned.

Another who has emerged from the war—in which he served with the R.A.F.—is the referee, Teddy Waltham. His action in stopping the Frenchman, Dogniaux, in his fight with Al Phillips earned him the rage of the crowd and the admiration of the few. Waltham argued that Dogniaux could not have a chance of winning and rightly stopped a pointless contest. The business of boxing can do with a great deal more of this kind of refereeing.

WELCOME STRANGER

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bawling. We had enough trouble without Oliver in a tearful fit. "Where did you see him last?" I asked.

"Somewhere," Oliver blurted. He was hedging; I fixed my eyes on him.

"Somewhere where?"

"Well," Oliver said, "he sleeps in the barn, but I had to feed him. So I took him in the kitchen, just for a minute——"

"You took him into the house!"

"Just for a minute——"

"And left him there?"

"No! Well, yes. I just went to get him a bowl of water at the pump——"

I got up and started for the ladder. "Come on!" I said. I had a vision of the mongrel chewing up the dining-room rug while mother and father and the others went on with their talking in the parlour, unknowingly.

Oliver and I moved quickly and quietly, looking into corners and under tables. There was no sign of Doris, not a hair of the creature anywhere in sight. Oliver hissed: "I'll look upstairs."

In three minutes or less Oliver was back, peering round the foot of the staircase, the skinny dog dangling in his arms. Then I *was* angry. "You know what father said," I whispered fiercely. "Where'd you find the dog?"

"In the spare room," he said. I shoved his shoulder, spinning him round. "Get out of my way," I said, and ran up the stairs two steps at a time. I was prepared for the worst.

And the worst had happened. Mr. Mifflin's suitcase lay open.

One of Mr. Mifflin's shirts was on the floor. It was in rags. One of his slippers was on the floor. The heel was chewed off it. On the floor, too, was a green notebook, most of the pages shredded out of it.

I KNEW there was only one thing to do. I had to do it. I went down the stairs and into the parlour and I caught father's arm. I told him, quietly as I could, what the dog had done.

I remember as though it were yesterday how white with fury Mr. Mifflin was, as he ran up to the bedroom. You could see what a mean, ugly soul he had. He shouted at father: "You'll pay for this! You'll pay——"

"All right," father said, cold and steady. "I'll pay. Let's see—one shirt, a pair of slippers, a tie——"

"And the notebook," father said. "About a sovereign's worth of damage, isn't it?" Then he bent to the floor and picked up some of the scattered bits of paper. "It looks as though this was once the textbook contract," he murmured.

Mr. Mifflin's voice came harsh and loud. "Your wife," he said, "signed the contract. She has a moral obligation——"

Father looked with level eyes at Mr. Mifflin. His voice was low, but it bored in. "We take a pride in being honest people. I don't think we need a lesson in moral obligations."

Then father closed his ears to all disputing and moved firmly towards the door; and that was the way Mr. Mifflin left our house that morning, with a sovereign and his suitcase tossed into the lane behind him.

Mr. Bell had the last word. He patted mother's hand. "It was a natural mistake," he said kindly. "Shall we agree to charge it to experience? The fault's really ours for not having warned you against Mifflin." Mr. Gifford and Mr. Hansard were nodding their heads. Mr. Bell looked around at me. "And you'll keep this under your hat, sonny. Private business of the school board, you know."

So help me, I've never breathed a word about it until this day.

Anton Walbrook and Diana Wynyard in a scene from the British film "Gaslight." America destroyed all but one copy of this sterling effort

Charles Boyer and Ingrid Bergman were substituted for the stars of "Gaslight." The American version of the film came here under the title "Murder in Thornton Square"

GIVE AMERICA FILMS THAT ARE BRITISH

No good selling "Hollywood" pictures to America, but there's a market waiting for the true-to-life British film. Americans like originality and our productions have got just that

says ANDREW GRAY

MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN about plans for British films to conquer America by copying American picture production methods. It is time we stopped thinking along these lines and, as the Americans would put it, "got wise to ourselves."

After all, we are not going to beat America at her own game. Everything is against it. Hollywood's sunshine, America's freedom from war damage, and the vast transatlantic motion picture resources.

Anyway, American audiences don't want carbon copies of Hollywood films.

I was stationed abroad for three years. During that time a few British films were shown to both American and British troops. (They were few. There could have been more but the golden opportunity was lost.)

I questioned the Americans carefully after each film. The majority liked our brand of movie.

"They're okay," one G.I. who had been a pre-war newspaper film critic summed up, "only we never see them in the States. Leastways, not in Texas."

"Ain't never seen anything like that there *Fanny By Gaslight* before," said another. "Liked it fine, but I guess we wouldn't be able to show a picture with a title like that."

You Make Movies?

A third G.I. told me he never knew we British made pictures in Britain. "I always thought you got all your movies from us," he said.

He wasn't far wrong. But why didn't he know we made pictures in Britain?

Because American big business has seen to it that British films are not widely shown. Why? Because American film heads, who see every picture we make for business reasons, aren't certain that their internal public would pooh-pooh them.

In fact they seem frightened. Americans might take to British films. British films would be different. And big business never gives a sucker an even break. When in doubt, keep it out.

One classic example was *Gaslight*. The American film magnate who bought the American rights of that sterling British effort didn't buy it to show in his company's cinemas. He bought it to destroy. Hitler destroyed good things, too, because he didn't want to take chances.

All except one copy of *Gaslight* were destroyed. This copy was used as a guide for the Hollywood version, in which Charles Boyer and Ingrid Bergman were substituted for Anton Walbrook and Diana Wynyard. America saw the film, for the first time, as *Gaslight*. Britain saw *Gaslight* for the second time as *Murder in Thornton Square*.

Another example of Hollywood trading-in on Continental films was the copying of Jean Gabin's *Pepé le Moko* into Charles Boyer's *Algiers*.

I saw both versions, one after the other, in Algiers itself two years ago, and can personally vouch for it that Hollywood's version is, scene for scene, a duplicate of France's original *Pepé le Moko*.

Perhaps some of you will wonder why I call British films Continental. That is not because I think of Britain as part of the Continent (although at times I feel we would be wiser to do so) but because I regard British films as belonging to the Continental school.

Better than Glamour

By that I mean the school of more lifelike films, truer pictures of life as it really is or was. None of the perfectly hair-waved and manicured heroines who, through thick and thin, through the ravages of war, cowboys and Indians, floods, earthquakes, rail crashes, thunder and lightning, emerge with perfect coiffures, painted finger nails, upturned eyelashes, firm foundations.

None of the false, flag-waving sentiment which creeps into so many American films.

Could Hollywood produce the stark realism and simple glory of Russia's *Rainbow*? Would the west coast merchants capture the sincerity of Britain's *Brief Encounter*? How could Hollywood interpret France's *La Rue Sans Joie*? Italy's *Roma, Citta Aperta*?

In Rome recently I talked with Alida Valli, a heroine of over thirty major productions. She asked me, almost on the eve of her departure for Hollywood, where she has a seven-year contract, what I thought they would first do with her there.

I was blunt. I said: "Fix your teeth."

Her teeth were uneven and in front was the slightest gap.

She understood. She blushed a little, then said, almost apologetically: "I know. I wanted them fixed long ago but my director said I must not.

"He said if my teeth were perfected then I would be almost perfect and thus not natural. He explained to me that perfect-in-appearance heroines, such as American film actresses seem to be, are not as convincing as *real*, imperfect heroines. I hope I make myself clear."

She made herself clear all right. She didn't tell me in exactly the words I have written above, but she did put in a nutshell the difference between American and Continental pictures. Keeping it natural is the main secret of European film charm.

Just a Copy-cat

Yet one leading British film magnate has said that he will win the American market if he has to become the world's greatest copy-cat. I think he is wrong. What is keeping British films out of America is not the quality of British pictures. It is big business.

How can we know what pictures America will like from us if Americans are not allowed to see what we can produce? Outside the larger U.S. cities, where we show our own pictures in "shop window" cinemas bought at great expense, people do not know that British films exist.

I feel that Americans will enjoy our films *just as we make them* when they are allowed to see them.

Just as Americans liked us during the war, so will they like our films. America is a land of progress and a carbon copy isn't good enough for them.

Let's give them British originals. They love originality.

And besides, don't we ourselves like our pictures to be British?

Free Speech

NOT HUNGRY ENOUGH YET?

Unwanted women drivers. Waste of reminder notices. Overtime for miners. Tongues that wreck marriages. Waiting for divorce. Making fun of stutterers. When addresses are omitted. Bus ticket coincidence

HOUSEWIVES WHO GROUSE about the food shortage and their hard lives would do well to look at some of the farmers' wives.

My wife starts at 5 a.m. seven mornings a week. She helps with milking and looking after the poultry, pigs and calves. She cares for our four-month-old baby, runs the house and does all the cooking for us and for three workers who live in.

She does the washing (including milking smocks) and the mending. We have no gas, electricity or mains water supply. I need hardly say that I am as fully occupied as she is. We are lucky if we get to bed before midnight.

Yet, despite all this, the farm has been near to losing money for the last three years.

The whole trouble, as I see it, is that the people of Britain have not been half hungry enough yet. When they are, perhaps they will value land produce and be prepared to pay a reasonable price for it in comparison with the products of other industries.

It is high time the farmer and his wife had a better job than providing a benevolent institution for the rest of the community.—NORFOLK FARMER (Name and address enclosed).

Non-starter

GOOD ILLUSTRATION of the shortage of skilled labour despite demobilization. In a London garage the other day I saw two overalled men struggling to push a big van from one end of the building to the other.

I gave them a hand and asked what was wrong with the van. "Oh, nothing wrong," they told me; "but the guv'nor is out and he's the only one who can drive."—JOHN BLAND, 169 Turner Road, Edgware, Middlesex.

Not Wanted Now

MY FRIEND, an ex-member of the N.F.S. with six years' driving experience on all types of vehicles, cannot get a driving job anywhere now. She has been trying continuously for the last five months.

Women drivers were wanted in the bad times of war. Are they now going to be thrown aside?—E. SLATER, Rochdale, Lancs.

Airy Reminders

NO WONDER the wireless licence has to go up to meet expenses. I pay mine every year on January 31. Yet I always receive a notice from the Post Office some time in February asking me to pay up.

The cost of sending reminders like this to millions of people must be enormous.—MRS. DORA PEARSON, 51 Haslemere Avenue, Barnet, Herts.

Just an Idea . . .

WHY DON'T THE MINERS express their willingness to work, say, an hour overtime each day? Surely that is the spirit we need most now in our industrial life.

What about it, miners? You have never had a better chance to prove your worth than you have today.—ARTHUR HOUGHTON, 1 Bridge Street, Garstang, near Preston, Lancs.

Storm Over a Teacup?

WILL YOU PRINT another warning to those with malicious tongues? I have just returned from overseas on compassionate grounds. A few months ago I had a letter telling me my wife was being unfaithful. I could tell the story was not true but my wife was so worried she had a serious illness.

As soon as I got home I sorted everything out. The only reason for the whole trouble was that an American soldier had taken my wife and little boy to a Christmas party at his camp.—PAT DOYLE, Ashley, Box, near Chippenham, Wiltshire.

Ministry's Short Cut

THREE YEARS AGO the Ministry of Works built us a fine school kitchen with a water boiler. Unfortunately the fire bricks were broken when they arrived.

Endless letters, forms and telegrams passed between the school authorities and the Ministry. Then we were told that the machinery did not exist for obtaining new fire bricks.

A local builder offered to put things right. The Ministry would not agree but they said, "a complete new boiler may be requisitioned."—HEADMISTRESS, Suffolk. (Name and address enclosed).

Waiting for Freedom

MY WIFE LEFT ME in January, 1944, and the R.A.F. Legal Aid Section got my case accepted by the Law Courts in June on payment of £5. Since then I have heard nothing except a request to know how much I am now earning in civvy street.

It looks as if I (the innocent party) will have to wait another eighteen months before I can claim to be domestically happy again.

I did a full five years in the R.A.F.—half of the time in the Far East. I was told I was fighting for a whole lot of decent things. Class distinction in divorce cases is certainly not one of those things.—C. M. (Name and address enclosed).

Cheap Scoring

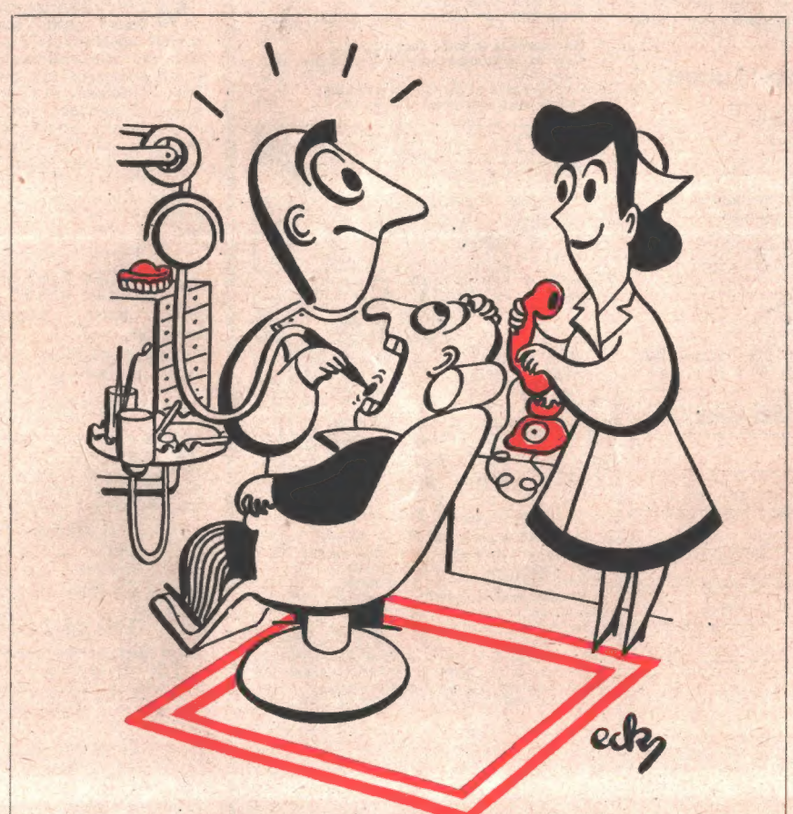
I PROTEST AGAINST the people who get a big fee as entertainers and do nothing but imitate those with a physical disability such as stammering.

Not long ago I saw a highly paid "star" who did little else but stutter.—B. HIGGS, 29 Sarrington Road, Corby, Kettering, Northants.

Russian Utopia?

YOUR RECENT ARTICLE on the "Riddle of the Russian Mind" by Willi Frischauer confirms the belief I have always held about the Russians.

I believe morale in the Soviet Union today is no higher than it was in the days of Ivan the Terrible. The bulk of the Red Army is still illiterate. Yet we have poor misguided citizens here who hold up Russia as a modern Utopia.—P. J. MCANAW, 67 Delhi Avenue, Dalmuir West, Glasgow.



"It's Mrs. Smith cancelling her new set because of the food shortage"

When Meters Peter

IT IS TIME SOMETHING WAS DONE about these electric light meters. The other day, while decorating at home, the light went out just as I was putting up a strip of wallpaper.

I had a shilling in the pocket of my coat. Before I got to it and put it in the meter, I stepped in a paste-pot and fell on a sheet of pasted paper. Couldn't someone devise a meter that would flicker the lights when our shillingsworths were running out?—S. LEWIS, 39 Jubilee Crescent, Bois Hall Estate, Addlestone, Surrey.

"Stepped in a paste-pot"

". . . No Pack Drill"

I CANNOT UNDERSTAND why some people who write to you will not allow their names and addresses to be published. Security reasons explained a lot in war-time but now "Free Speech" should be really free. There should be no question of victimization. — G. RAMAGE, 1 Quainton Street, Neasden, N.W.10.

*** JOHN BULL never prints anonymous letters. But there are good and sensible reasons why sometimes correspondents' full names and addresses should not be published. The present law of libel is sometimes an enemy of free speech, and often for personal reasons correspondents do not wish to be known publicly. Many Servicemen would not care to commit their views to paper unless they were sure that their identity would remain secret. Nevertheless, JOHN BULL always prefers to print names and addresses.

Chance Tickets

WHEN YOU TRAVEL on a bus it is a thousand to one chance against getting a ticket on which all four numbers are the same—say, for example, TV 8888 or perhaps DA 4444.

Yet during the last month I was given the following tickets: IB 2222, GA 5555, CL 6666, GR 6666 and HT 9999. The number of journeys I made was approximately forty.—P. F., Bickley, Bromley, Kent.

A-hunting They Went

SAY WHAT YOU LIKE, we are hypocrites at heart.

I recently attended a meet of a famous hunt—the first post-war turn-out in full regalia. Among the hundreds of spectators I picked out many strong Labour men.

They had turned out on a cold and frosty morning to admire the Lord of the Manor and the hunting they profess to despise.—COUNTRYMAN. (Name and address enclosed.)

LETTERS *intended for this page should be marked "Free Speech." One guinea will be paid as an acknowledgment for every reader's letter or extract published. Full name and address must be given (though not necessarily for publication). Please keep letters brief.*

200 Holidays for Readers — we pay the bill!

Off to the sea with a chosen companion for the holiday of your lives, your pockets loaded with cash from Long Acre and your hotel bill paid by *John Bull*. That is the thrilling prospect ahead of all the chief winners in *Bullets* Record 1946 Holiday Campaign.

Scarborough, Bournemouth, Torquay, the Isle of Wight—you can choose the resort at which to enjoy a glorious Free Week's Holiday for Two.

No fewer than 200 readers will secure seats in our Holiday Prize train and the first list of winners appears below. Reserve *your* place this week—with an entry posted by Monday, April 8!

HOLIDAY WINNERS—"BULLETS" 1,519

FIRST PRIZE, £500 and Holiday: G. Clark, 239 Charlestown Road, Blackley, Manchester: **Out Of The Dark—Industry?—Depending On Davy-lamp!** SECOND PRIZE: £50 and Holiday: Miss J. R. Mill, 33 Corriton Road, Causeway Head, Stirling: **Diplomacy—Useless, Unless Less "Unless——"** THIRD PRIZE, £25 and Holiday: L. F. Reynolds, Addison Road, Wimblington, March, Cambs.: **Shining Example—Austerity, But How Dull!**

£10 PLUS HOLIDAY WINNERS: S. Alexander, 24 Shaftesbury Avenue, W. Worthing: **Straight Answer—To Wife's Question, Wife's!** N. Beatson, 28 Highfield Road, Netherton, Wakefield: **While We Watch—"March Past," "Reviewing" Future? Miss M. Cook, 17 Margaret Street, Hull: Some Of The Restrictions—Must Go—Going Musty.** F. Cullum, Patrick's Road, Dovercourt: **Without Coal—No Place Like—*Pictures!*** C. Graham, 176 Institution Street, Kirkcaldy, Fife: **Slightly Irregular—Cook's Pulse—Robert's "Beat"!** J. J. Jordan, The Bungalow, Winestead Colony, Patrington, Hull: **When Dad Came In—"What's Held You Up?"** H. Newbold, 18 Chantry Place, Kiveton Park, near Sheffield: **Slightly Different—"Any Chance Of *Workers*?"** H. J. Nicol, Cliffside, Cliff Gardens, Leigh-on-Sea: **Slightly Tinged—With "Green," Red Policy?** S. S. Parfitt, 49 Allen Street, Mountain Ash, Glam.: **While We Reason—"Barriers" Collapsing *Prevent* "Disaster."** B. J. Stevenson, 10 Highfield Road, Northwood: **Ideal Holiday—Trouble-free—Trouble, Cost.**

Cash has been posted to 50 winners of £1 and 1,000 of 2s. 6d.

"BULLETS" CHEQUES and SEASIDE WEEKS

To Win In "Bullets."

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example* from end of list, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

Cash for 1,063 Readers.

£250 plus Holiday; £50 plus Holiday; £25 plus Holiday; £20 plus Holiday; £15 plus Holiday; 8 Holiday Cheques each £10; 50 of £1; 1,000 of 2s. 6d.

Note:—Holiday Prize consists of week's free Hotel Accommodation for Two, arranged at Seaside Resort of your choice by Cooks Travel Service.

Add Two, Three or Four Words to any of these "Examples"

PROSPERITY'S SHIP
TO PROGRESS
PLEASE, MR. SCIENTIST
FULLY EMPLOYED
GENERAL FRANCO
SON OF THE SOIL
ROUGH AND READY
TO ERR IS HUMAN, SO
GLAMOUR GIRL
ROSY FUTURE
THE HARD WAY
WHILST THERE'S TIME
WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE
UNHOLY MESS
HAPPY AS A KING

LOVELY GRUB
SANDY'S HOLIDAY
FIRST TO SHOUT
HAD A BASINFUL
WHEN AUNTIE BROADCAST

Incomplete "Examples" See Instructions.

BAD DAY FOR.....
FEEDING.....
IN.....WAY
TIRED OF.....
IGNORING THE.....
GIVE US A.....AND

ADDRESS ENTRY

"BULLETS" 1,523 (or XWORD 475); "JOHN BULL," LONG ACRE, LONDON, W.C.2 (COMP.)

ENCLOSE 6d. for 2 "BULLETS"—1s. for 4—EXTRAS, SAME RATE

EXAMPLE .....
BULLET .....
EXAMPLE .....
BULLET .....
EXAMPLE .....
BULLET .....
EXAMPLE .....
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For Victory Offer "Bulletin" (April 20) enclose 2½d. std. add. envelope

1,523 Closing Postmark, MON., APRIL 8.

I agree to rules and enclose

P.O. value.....

No. .....

Signed .....

Address .....

.....

.....

RULES. 1. First Prize to best *Bullet* received, others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps value 1s. for four *Bullets*, or value 6d. to cover two *Bullets*. Plain paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to *John Bull*, cross / & Co. /, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted only on condition that results of this week's Contests in *John Bull* dated April 27, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding.

XWORD 471 RESULT

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1, Siege. 2, Mill. 3, Tip. 10, Feat. 12, Hope. 13, Horse. DOWN: 1, Slang. 2, Mob. 4, Sty. 5, Fox. 6, Car. 7, Boat. 8, Bank. 9, Cash. 11, Tube.

TWO £100 SHARERS: Mrs. N. Behan, 58 Moss Park Road, Stratford, Manchester; A. J. Lane, 39 Union Road, Shirley, Birmingham.

Runners-up Awards (value £50 cash) shared between 27 entrants.

XWORD EASTER CASH

Up to 100 big 4 lb. Fruit Cakes for Crosswords. They're added to all prizes of 5s. and over in this week's new offer of Easter Cash—£100 First and £25 Cash for Runners-up.

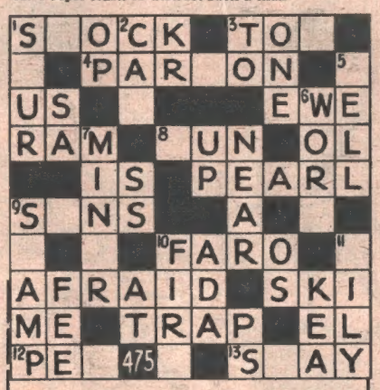
Post your Square below by Monday, April 8.

Across Clues.

1. Looks very appropriate, seen in autumn countryside
3. It may well require desperate effort to carry
4. Condemned man isn't always glad to receive
8. Produces certain amount of heat
9. Our fathers were more interested in these than we are
12. It would probably be better if some people were tied down to one
13. Once a man's become tyrannical ruler, willy-nilly he must

Down Clues.

1. Willing horse with too much work to do may even get this
2. Soon makes a noise if hurt
5. Sometimes in the nature of a jar
6. Long, difficult one does not always mean most
7. May prove even taller than expected
9. Task of reclaiming one is usually long and expensive
10. Could be seen at times on top of hills
11. People learn to distrust such a man



How To Enter This Coupon.

Complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues above. Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entry constitutes agreement to Rules.

For this one Square, enclose P.O. or stamps value 6d. to cover also cost of printing, despatch and posting to you of *John Bull's* interesting and helpful *Crossword Gazette* dated April 20. If no *Gazette* required, one additional plain-paper set of Answers allowed.

I enclose 6d. P.O.

Closing Postmark, MON., APRIL 8.

475

No.....

Signed.....

Address.....

.....

.....

WRITE TO JOHN BULL ABOUT IT

The war complicated life and produced many new difficulties. Thousands of people have had their problems solved by JOHN BULL's Free Advice Service

Deed Signature

"I BOUGHT MY HOUSE through a building society and redeemed the mortgage last year. Now I find that the deed has been signed and sealed by the seller but not by me. Does this make any difference? Ought I to sign it now in the presence of a solicitor? What is meant by the 'sealing and delivery' of a deed?"

✓ It is not usual for the purchaser to sign the deed of conveyance. As it was signed by the seller, that is all that is necessary.

The seal on a document makes it a deed. "Delivery" is the act of handing it over and thus completing the transaction.

Electrical Business

"SINCE LEAVING THE FORCES I am thinking of starting as a private contractor in the electrical trade, working on my own. Do I have to obtain a licence? If so, where can I get it and how much will it cost?"

✓ For electrical installation contracting you must have a certificate of registration. This is obtainable from the Ministry of Works, Lambeth Bridge House, London, S.E.1.

The certificate is issued free of charge, but is only granted when the applicant has a strong case.

Legacy Duty

"MY HUSBAND BEQUEATHED OUR house and contents to myself absolutely. I am anxious that my two children shall have equal shares of my home, and I have specified in my will the items of furniture each shall have at my death, and that the house be sold and the money divided equally between them.

"I am told that legacy duty will be demanded from each after assessment of the value. Is this so?"

✓ Estate duty is payable on the total value of the estate which passes on your death. Legacy duty, however, will not be payable by your children unless your estate exceeds £15,000 in value.

No Collection

"THE LANDLORD expects me to take the rent to him although, now I have a baby, this is very inconvenient. Must a tenant deliver rent to a landlord?"

✓ It is the tenant's duty to tender the rent to the landlord. It is not the landlord's duty to collect it.

Tractor Licence

"WHAT IS THE MINIMUM age at which a person can obtain a licence to drive an agricultural tractor? Is there any form of driving test?"

✓ There is at present an emergency regulation which permits a person from seventeen years of age holding a car licence to drive a tractor on the public highway while the tractor is being used for work on a farm near by. If the tractor is taken out on the public highway for haulage purposes it is classified under Group 6 for which the driver's minimum age is twenty-one.

The road test connected with this has been suspended, but is likely to be reinstated in the near future.

Service Liability

"ONE OF MY RELATIVES living in Newfoundland is anxious to send his two sons over here to finish their education at an English university. He has heard that they will be liable to be called up for military service while here. Is this correct?"

✓ The boys will not be liable to be called up. The Defence (National Service) Regulations, 1944, expired in February last. Henceforward, men from British Dominions and Colonies will not be called up until they have been in this country for two years, and not then if they are here for a course of education or otherwise for a temporary purpose only.

Who Takes Charge?

"MY AUNT IS eighty years of age, now a widow and bedridden. She had married a widower with five children but has none of her own. She has a half-brother and about a dozen nephews and nieces.

"If she should die without making a will, who would be entitled to take charge of her affairs? Can the step-children claim? Does the half-brother come first as next-of-kin?"

✓ The nephews and nieces appear to be the next-of-kin, and one or more of them may have to take out Letters of Administration at the local Customs and Excise Office. Any articles of furniture lent by other members of the family can be reclaimed at will.

American Friend

"A FRIEND OF MINE is serving in the American Army Air Corps but I have not heard of him for some months. My last letter to him was returned by the Post Office. Is there any way in which I can get in touch with him?"

✓ You should send details of your friend's name, number, etc., to the American Armed Forces, Locator File, 47 Grosvenor Square, London, W.1, inquiring whether they have a later address than the one you used for your last letter.

JOHN BULL SERVICE

SEND your general queries (except medical) to the JOHN BULL Free Advice Service, 93 Long Acre, London, W.C.2.

Personal problems should be sent to "Humanist" at the same address. Stamp for reply, please.

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CVS-4

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* See Telephone Directory for local address

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2/- and 3/6 a bottle (tax inc.)

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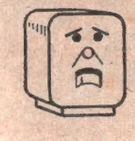
Playtime is never dull while Helen sets the pace. She is a favourite at school, joyously carefree . . . alert . . . *alive!* Helen is "a picture of health" says Mother, who has always made it a simple rule to give her a dose of 'California Syrup of Figs' when biliousness or constipation have shown the need. 'California Syrup of Figs' is ideal for children. It is the laxative they like. It quickly regulates the system.

'California Syrup of Figs'

What have you?

An old "boneshaker" which is well overdue for demobilisation . . . or a "box of tricks" which causes you to say (quite unjustifiably)—". . . . . the B.B.C." every time you switch on?



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There was a little man,

And he felt a little glum,

He thought that a Guinness was
due, due, due.

So he went to 'The Plough' . . .

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For a Guinness is good for
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